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OLD DOUBLE SWORD; or, Pilots and Pirates.

A TALE OF THE OMNIPRESENT YANKEE IN FAR EASTERN SEAS.

BY CAPTAIN FRED. WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF "NEMO, KING OF THE TRAMPS," "RED RUDIGER," "THE RUSSIAN SPY," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE IRISH CAPTAIN," "THE MAN IN RED," "DEATH'S HEAD CUIRASSIERS," "PHANTOM KNIGHTS," ETC., ETC.



DOUBLE SWORD DROVE HIM OFF THE PLATFORM, TOTALLY REGARDLESS OF THE BEATEN WARRIOR.

Old Double Sword ;

OR,

PILOTS AND PIRATES.

A Tale of the Omnipresent Yankee
in Far Eastern Seas.

BY CAPT. FRED'K WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE FLYING DUTCHMAN OF 1880,"
"THE RED RAJAH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. THE LORCHA.

THE steamer Golden Gate had made a fine run from San Francisco, and was expecting to be in Yokohama next night, when she ran into the wrong side of a typhoon. Spite of her fifteen-hundred-horse-power engines, she was buffeted about like a cockle-shell, and driven two days out of her course.

Most of the male passengers were sick, and all the ladies were helpless.

The exceptions, among the gentlemen in the first cabin, were Jack Ely and Meeto Kurosama, young men about the same age, both from Yale college.

Jack was coming out to join the house of Fisk, Ely & Co., traders at Yokohama; Meeto was going home to his father, a prince with two million subjects.

Jack and Meeto had been chums at Yale, much to everybody's surprise and to the disgust of some, for Meeto was an unmitigated heathen while Jack came of Puritan stock.

Jack was the son of plain sailors and traders for five generations; Meeto could count a hundred princes among his ancestors, back to the days of the first Tycoon.* Yet they were fast friends, and Jack had learned to talk Japanese as well as Meeto talked English.

It all grew out of a fight in the streets of New Haven, when Jack was a freshman, and the "sophs" undertook to haze him and Meeto, who entered the same day.

They tried the young Jap first, and Jack heard the noise. He took a big stick and sailed in to help the stranger, who was already taking his own part very effectively.

Result: they whipped the "sophs" and became fast friends, to the mutual advantage of East and West.

Meeto, like most American-educated Japanese, had discarded his native garb and the two swords he had been used to wear as the privilege of a *daimio*, or prince, and looked like a young Cuban.

He was rather tall, with a smooth, olive face and brown-black eyes; athletic in figure, expert at all kinds of gymnastics and, especially at sword-play, while his manners were infinitely more courtly than those of Jack, who had a good deal of the Yale college roughness about him.

Young Ely, on the other hand, was of medium size, fair-haired and blue-eyed, thickset and round-headed, a devotee of boxing, and a first-class shot and fencer.

They were standing by the quarter-rail on the third day of the storm, which had changed to a heavy northwest gale, and the steamer was plowing through the midst of it, trying to get back to her course, when the captain passed them on his way to the bridge, and said, more cheerfully than he had spoken since the beginning of the dirty weather:

"Gale's breaking, gentlemen. Gad, Mr. Kurosama, I began to be afraid you'd never see your father again, one time."

Meeto showed his white teeth in a smile, replying in his courtly way:

"Most excellent captain. I humbly thank you for your solicitude on my behalf. But you know we of our nation never allow fear to influence us. When do you hope to see Yokohama?"

"Two days more, if we don't run into another of those confounded typhoons," said Captain Grommet, rather ruefully. "Worst luck I ever had."

Then he was off to the bridge, just as a big sea swept in over the bow, and came racing along the three hundred feet of white deck of the Golden Gate, causing the two friends to climb up on the rail to get out of the way of a good drenching.

It was while holding on to the shrouds, when the wave was retreating, that they heard the long-drawn cry from the foretopmast head:

"Sail-ho!"

The sailors round the deck started from their listless attitudes at the cry, for they had not seen a sail for nearly a week, and Jack Ely cried out:

* Japan had, until 1868, as all the world knows, a double government, composed of the *Mikado*, or Emperor (who was also Pope, and supposed to be of divine descent), and the *Tycoon*, or *Shogun*, who was the Head General originally, but really wielded all the power till the revolution of 1868, when the last *Tycoon* was deposed by order of the *Mikado* and sent into retirement. "*Tai-koon*" means "Great Lord."

"Hurra, Meeto! A sail at last! Now we shall see some life, I hope. Let's go up and find out what it is."

The young Japanese nodded and jumped down, when the two friends raced along the deck to get to the foremast before another wave came.

They were both pretty fair sailors, for Jack came from Nantucket, and Meeto's father's province was full of fishermen, among whom the lad had been brought up.

They were just in time to skip up the shrouds, as the next wave came, and they had not got half-way up when Meeto cried, pointing off on the bow:

"There, there, my friend! A *lorcha*, and a big one, too. See!"

Off ahead, a little to the right, came a great, square mat-sail, swelled to its utmost dimensions, spite of the severity of the gale, above a small hull, of which only glimpses could be caught between the mountainous waves.

The sail was coming on before the gale with immense rapidity, the steamer meeting it, and within ten minutes from its first announcement, the sailors had crowded to the starboard side to see it pass, within half a cable-length.

Jack Ely, who had never been in the East before, watched the strange craft with great interest and excitement.

Such a vessel he had never seen.

A single sail of brown matting, of enormous size, crossed by bamboos that made it look like the slats of a huge window-blind, was supported on a triangle of poles, nearly amidships of two long narrow boats, united by a platform between them.

The platform, in spite of the severity of the storm, was quite dry, and was crowded with men, dressed in a fashion that Ely had never seen before, outside of Japanese pictures.

Their legs were bare, their heads covered with umbrella-shaped hats, while they wore short capes of some rough stuff that looked like bundles of ropes, over short tunics and gaudy loin-cloths.

Each man wore two short swords, stuck in his sash; and one fellow of lofty stature wore his swords over a yard long, while his dress of blue and scarlet seemed to mark him as a chief.

The American had hardly time to note all this, when the *lorcha* swept by; and he heard the sailors gabbling to each other excitedly, as if the sight were uncommon.

Beckoning to Meeto—for they could hardly hear each other over the whistling of the gale—Jack Ely jumped down and ran aft behind the round-house, where they were sheltered from the wind and waves, before he spoke.

"What makes the men talk so much?" he asked. "You understand these seas. Is that the way your vessels generally go sailing about in this part of the world?"

Kurosama shook his head, and his countenance looked very grave as he answered his friend:

"No indeed. It is strange we should have met that vessel."

"Why?"

"She is not often seen."

Kurosama did not seem inclined to talk much on the subject, and Ely was puzzled; for his friend had hitherto been, as he thought, open as the day to him.

"Not often seen?" he repeated. "Why, why? Don't be so confounded mysterious, Meeto. What kind of a vessel was she?"

The Japanese smiled politely.

"I have had the honor to assure my most distinguished friend that she was a *lorcha*."

"But what the dickens is a *lorcha*?"

"That was a *lorcha*. They are not much used in our seas. They belong properly to the Southern islands of the Malays."

"Are they traders?"

"Some are."

"Was that one a trader?"

Meeto smiled again.

"Most distinguished and dear friend, I am unable to say."

Ely turned away in a pet.

"You don't want to tell me," he said. "Very well, I'll ask some one else."

Meeto's only answer was a polite bow, and he turned away to his cabin, when Jack Ely hunted up the first mate of the boat and asked him:

"Please, Mr. Lyons, what sort of a vessel was that queer craft that just passed?"

Lyons was an old sea-dog, and he shifted his quid and spit over the rail before he answered:

"That craft do you mean, sir? Well, she were a *lorcha*."

"But what the deuce is a *lorcha*?"

"They call 'em so when they're rigged that way. Some call 'em *prows*. The blooming Malays build 'em."

"Are they traders?"

Lyons spat again, and a faint grin lighted up his weather-beaten face.

"Well, yes; sorter traders."

"What kind?"

"Kind that trades hard knocks for hard cash, sir. I've seen the time when—"

"When what?"

"Well, when I wouldn't have liked to see that chap that went by."

"And when was that?"

"When I were aboard a sailer, that's all," was the dry reply. "Steamers is safer."

Jack Ely, completely mystified, broke out:

"What in the world do you mean? You can't—you can't possibly mean a *pirate*?"

"That's just what I do mean, Mr. Ely. That 'ere *lorcha* had all the look of a bloody Malay pirate, every smitch of her, only for one thing."

"And that was?"

"She was all full of Japs, and they don't use that sort of craft as a rule, though I have heard of one man who was said to do it. It may be the same."

"And who is that man?"

Lyons turned his quid again.

"Well, sir, he's a bloody Satsuma man, I'm told."

"And what's a Satsuma man?" asked Ely, who only knew of the name as that of a province belonging to one of the most powerful princes of Japan.

Lyons spat into the sea.

"A Satsuma man? Well, Mr. Ely, this is your first visit to Japan, I guess, or you wouldn't ask. I've been in this trade since 'fifty four, when we first had the treaty, and I mind the time when it was as much as a man's life was worth to go outside the walls of the treaty part of Kamegawa so much as fifty yards, for the bloody *samories*."

"The what?"

"The *samories*—the fellers with the swords."

"Oh, the *samurai** you mean?"

Lyons stared.

"What in blazes do you know about them? Oh, I forgot. I s'pose Mr. Kurosama told you. Well, he'll tell you a good deal, but, mark my words, he's a Jap and he won't tell you much, now he's coming back to his own country."

Ely laughed.

"I'll risk that. But go on. This Satsuma man; what of him?"

"Nothing much; only 'twas the Satsuma men kicked up the fight in 'sixty-three, and it was the Prince of Satsuma that got his old town burnt by the British for his pains. There's no pleasing those Satsuma men. They hate foreigners like poison, and they'd like to kill every mother's son of us if they dared."

"And this particular man of whom you spoke? What of him?"

"Oh, nothing much. Only I heard that one of them, they call Old Double Sword, had been building a *lorcha*, and I guess it's the same man."

"What did he build it for?"

"To go pirating in, the blooming villain! He couldn't want it for nothing else. You don't know those Japs yet, Mr. Ely. They hate us bad enough, and I reckon they hate the Chinese worse. Anyhow, they're bound to keep up the old ways as long as they can."

"And what were they, Lyons? I've always heard from my friend Meeto that they lived a very pleasant and peaceable life."

Lyons shrugged his shoulders.

"That's according to how a person's brought up. What *they* call pleasant and peaceable I call murdering and bloody-minded. You don't know the Japs yet, Mr. Ely; but as you're going to live in Yokohama awhile you soon will know 'em. When we come back from next voyage you can tell me how you like 'em."

"I certainly will, Lyons."

Then the conversation ended, and the prejudiced old mate rolled away, while Ely sought his friend Kurosama, of whom he asked abruptly:

"Meeto, old fellow, did you ever know of a Satsuma man called Old Double Sword?"

Kurosama smiled in his polite way.

"Most distinguished friend, you must know that all *samurai* wear two swords. It cannot be a real name, any more than should I call you Mr. Connecticut."

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERY OF NAYBOON.

AND, try as he would, Jack could get no more out of Meeto on the subject of "Old Double Sword," if such a man really lived, for Kurosama assumed a polite but impenetrable mystery that baffled all of Ely's attempts to obtain light.

* It will be difficult, however the writer might wish it, to avoid using a few Japanese words, such as are commonly used by our people resident in the East, for convenience. The *samurai* are the "gentlemen" of Japan, in the same sense in which the word "gentleman" was used in feudal times in Europe. Japan to-day is governed just as was Europe in the fourteenth century. The *mikado* (emperor) is the head of all, absolute in power, controlled only by custom. Under him are the *daimios*, or princes, 266 in number, who hold their dominions as the barons of old did, on condition of furnishing an army in time of war. Under them come the *samios*, or petty lords, answering to the small barons of old, and under these again the *samurai*, or gentlemen, privileged to bear arms and living by their swords. The rest of the people are mere serfs, of little esteem, and subject to all sorts of outrage from the *samurai*.

He thought, having been the intimate associate of a Japanese noble for four years, having learned the language and heard so much about the manners of the people, especially the upper classes, that he was in a better position than that of a mere greenhorn; yet here, on the threshold of his entrance into Japan, he was met by a mystery he could not fathom in the person of his familiar friend, who had suddenly become to him as a stranger.

He had yet to master the peculiar custom of *mayboon*, of which he had not yet gained the least inkling.

What the *mayboon* is will appear later.

Somewhat offended with his friend for his reticence, Ely went below to the main cabin and remained there reading till dinner, by which hour the gale had abated, the sea fallen, and the lady-passengers, as well as the gentlemen, began to emerge from their state-rooms, so that the dinner-table presented its usual aspect once more.

Jack found himself at table next to a young lady who had been recognized as the belle of the ship, and with whom he had become very well acquainted during the voyage. Her name was Flora Hastings. She was the daughter of a missionary, and was going out to join her father, accompanied by her maiden-aunt, Miss Hoyt.

Miss Hoyt was always called by her surname and Flora called her "auntie," her Christian name remaining a mystery to most people on board. When the old lady wrote letters she signed with the initials "M. J. Hoyt," and Jack Ely had often wondered what M. J. stood for, till he asked Flora one day, and received for answer, with brightened color, the intelligence:

"My aunt was named in old-fashioned times, Mr. Ely, and her name is old-fashioned, too. It's taken out of the Bible. Don't be so curious."

Later on she admitted that M. stood for "Mehitable," so Jack asked:

"And the J. What's that? Jerusha?"

"No it isn't," answered Flora, and she would say no more, till Jack discovered, by an accident, in an old book, the full name of the spinster, "Mehitable Jezebel Hoyt," and asked no further questions.

Miss Hoyt, spite of her terrible name, was one of the sweetest of old maids, and had shared the perils of missionary life with her brother-in-law till the great outbreak of 1863 in the province of Satsuma, when Mr. Hastings had nearly lost his life, when Flora was born in the midst of the troubles, when Mrs. Hastings died and the maiden aunt took her baby-niece away in an open boat to Yokohama, as the only way of escape from the perils around them.

Jack Ely began, as soon as the soup had been disposed of, to talk to the ladies.

"Were you very sick, Miss Hastings?"

Flora shuddered.

"It was terrible in the middle of the storm, but I was more frightened than sick. Auntie here kept me up."

"I wish you had been on deck. You missed a strange sight this morning."

Miss Hoyt looked up quickly.

"What was it, Mr. Ely?"

"A Japanese *lorcha*. Mr. Lyons said she looked like a pirate, but I didn't know they had any remaining in this age."

The old maid's face changed and she looked disturbed as she said:

"A Japanese *lorcha*? Were the men all armed? Are you sure?"

"Certainly. They were armed to the teeth, with two swords apiece, and what more I don't know. You've lived here before, Miss Hoyt. Did you ever hear of a man called 'Old Double Sword'?"

He watched the old maid, and saw her give a frightened, apprehensive glance toward him, as if to see whether Meeto Kurosama were near, but the young Japanese had not come to dinner as usual and was still in his cabin.

"Don't talk about it any more, please," the old lady said, in a low tone, "at least not here. I'll tell you more about it after dinner, Mr. Ely."

Jack bowed slightly and went on with his dinner, talking on indifferent subjects, till they went on deck for the regular afternoon chat and smoke, which had been interrupted during the gale, but was resumed now, that fine weather had set in again.

Meeto Kurosama, much to Jack's surprise, kept his state-room and did not come on deck, though he had been one of the pleasantest of companions during the voyage, and particularly attentive to Miss Hoyt, as the only lady on board who could talk Japanese.

When they were settled in their chairs, at a little distance from the rest, Jack said:

"What is all this about Double Sword, Miss Hoyt? I've asked Meeto and he's dumb as an oyster, though I'll swear he looked to me as if he knew that *lorcha* and her people as they passed."

The old maid made him a sign to draw his chair closer, and went on with her knitting, apparently uninterested in anything she was saying, while she let drop in low sentences the words:

"Don't start. Don't look round. We are not in America now. We are coming to the East, where men smile in your face and stab you in the dark. Pretend to be indifferent, and answer my questions without letting your face change. Can you do it?"

Jack pulled his penknife out of his pocket, and began to whittle a little head on the end of a pencil, saying:

"Go ahead, Miss Hoyt. I'm a Yankee, and we don't back down in trials of wit. I'll answer. Ask away."

"You say you saw a pirate *lorcha*?"

"Lyons said it was."

"And you asked Mr. Kurosama—what?"

"If he knew a man called 'Old Double Sword.'"

"And what did he say?"

"Told me it was not a name; that all the *samurai* were two swords, and that one might as well call me Mr. Connecticut."

"He was right there. But did he say he knew the *lorcha*?"

"He evaded the question, and pretended he did not. I'm sure he did."

"Ah, yes. That was the *mayboon*."

"And what's the *mayboon*?"

"You'll find out when you've lived among Japanese a little. It is a custom peculiar to them; but, like all their customs, rigid as so much cast iron. If anything disagreeable happens in a family, anything that might bring it into trouble with the government, it is a custom of the whole family and all its followers and friends to pretend no one knows anything about it. You can't get them to mention it, even when they write out a history, and describe the consequences of the act. That custom is the *mayboon*."

"That's queer. Do you mean—?"

"I'll give you an instance that will show you what I mean. Mr. Kurosama's grandfather murdered his uncle, who was the head of his clan, and thereby became his successor. It was done in broad day before a number of people; but they were all members of the Kuro clan. If a stranger had seen it, the murderer would have been punished, but he was the next heir himself, and had become the liege lord of his clan. The murder at once became *mayboon*, a secret never to be mentioned, though every one knew it, and Hiroaki Kurosama lived and died in peace, as his uncle's successor."

"Then you think that this Double Sword is connected in some way with Kurosama's family, Miss Hoyt?"

"He must be, or he would talk about him. Probably he is a *ronin*."

"A what?"

"A *ronin*; that is a rebel."

"I don't understand."

"You will some day. I suppose you know that the feudal system prevails in the empire of Japan to-day, as it once did in Europe?"

"Yes. Meeto has explained that. He says that each *daimio* is a prince in his own place."

"Exactly, and over the *daimios* stands the mikado—the emperor who is high priest, pope, and everything in one. He can order a *daimio* about, just as a *daimio* can order a *samurai*, and every *daimio* is held responsible for what happens in his clan, unless his *samurai* rebel against him and throw off their allegiance to him. If they do that, they are called *ronins* or rebels, and their lord is not responsible for their acts. But remember this: no *samurai* will ever betray his *daimio*. He will stick by him against all the world, even the mikado; lie for him, steal, murder, suffer death and do anything, if he thinks it will please his lord."

"But the rebels, the *ronins*? They don't care for their lords?"

"Quite the reverse," said the spinster emphatically.

Jack could hardly help the forbidden start at this answer, and his tone was louder than caution required as he said:

"You surprise me. What do you mean?"

"I mean this. These *ronins*, who call themselves rebels, are the most faithful of all, and throw off their allegiance solely to please their masters."

Jack was completely puzzled.

"I can't understand for the life of me. Take this Double Sword, for instance. Why is he a *ronin*?"

Miss Hoyt looked round her cautiously before she answered.

"Are you sure Mr. Kurosama's in his cabin?" she half whispered. "He ought not to hear us. Please look, Mr. Ely."

Jack went to the cabin skylight, looked in, and saw his friend Meeto quietly eating a late dinner, attended by a Chinese coolie waiter. So he came back and reported:

"He's out and eating his dinner."

Miss Hoyt nodded and Flora looked at her in a way that showed they had been discussing the young Japanese before.

"I thought so," said the spinster. "Come close and listen, for we've no time to lose. If I'm not much mistaken, this man they call Old Double Sword is the same my brother wrote to me about, as one of Kurosama's *ronins*, and the worst of all."

"Well, what has he done?"

"He is supposed to have murdered, at different times, nearly two hundred foreigners," said the old lady with a shudder.

"But why?"

"To please his master."

"His master? Meeto's father?"

"The same man, Mr. Ely, you don't know the Japanese yet."

Jack was astounded.

"And you mean to say that Meeto's father wants to murder foreigners?"

"They all do," was the old maid's quiet reply. "Believe me, if the Japanese had their own way, they would exterminate every foreigner to-day and go back to their old policy of exclusiveness."

"Then why do they send their sons away to be educated in America, like Meeto?"

"To learn our secrets, if they can. You don't know how deep they are. They see we are superior to them in war and the arts, and they want to learn all we have to teach, in order that some day they may be strong enough to turn us all out and live by themselves. Prince Kurosama the elder—his name is Myamoto—is one of the most bigoted of the old nobles; but he has to submit to the mikado, who forces the *daimios* to keep peace with the foreigners. He dare not let his own *samurai* kill them openly, so he gives them a hint to turn rebels, and the boldest spirits do so, under this Double Sword, while the old prince pretends he cannot control them."

"But suppose they are caught at it? Would they be punished by the Government?"

The old lady nodded.

"If they could be caught, yes. But do you know what they would do if they were caught, and any questions asked?"

"No. What?"

"Every man of them would do *hara-kiri*," said Miss Hoyt, quietly. "You'll never find a *samurai* betray the head of his clan."

Jack knew well enough what she meant, for all the world has heard of *hara-kiri* or *hari-kari*, the Japanese method of committing suicide, by ripping themselves open with a cross cut.

He was considerably shocked at the old maid's story, for he was very fond of Meeto, and it was in a rather faltering voice he said:

"And do you think Meeto is as bad as the rest? What is to become of them all?"

Miss Hoyt sighed slightly.

"Mr. Ely, twenty years ago I left the town of Kagosima, in an open boat, when the *samurai* had murdered every white man in the province of Satsuma, save my brother-in-law. Do you know who saved him?"

"Who?"

"A Christian convert. That is the only hope of Japan, or I should not be going back. Depend upon it, the light will spread, if it gets a chance, and every day the old prejudices of Japan are breaking down. It will take a long time, but they will vanish at last. Already our people can travel safely in the empire, as long as they keep on the Government roads; and the common people do not hate them. It is the nobles and *samurai*, in the back provinces, that are still dangerous, and even they will change some day."

"And you. Where are you going?" asked Jack, not without a flutter at his heart, as he looked at Flora Hastings.

"To the back country," replied the old maid calmly.

"It is Flora's wish to join her father."

Jack looked at the two quiet, self-possessed ladies, who seemed so unfit to cope with the savage and vindictive people of whom he had just heard, and could not help the ejaculation:

"But why should you go needlessly into such danger as you have described? Suppose they break out again?"

Flora looked up and spoke for the first time:

"In that case, Mr. Ely, my father would not be alone in peril, as he has been for twenty years. My place is beside him."

Jack looked at her with a certain sinking of the heart. Hitherto he had only known her as the belle of the ship, pretty and agreeable, well educated and a good talker. He began to realize that this girl had something more in her than all this; that she was the stuff of which heroines are made. Brought up in the quiet and seclusion of a New England village, she was now deliberately going into what she knew to be frightful peril of death and torture, simply to be near a father, who might have come away any moment he pleased, but who preferred to stay, exiled from home and friends.

"And for what?" he asked musingly. "Why in the world do you all come here?"

Miss Hoyt laid down her crochet-work and looked him in the face.

"Why are you going to Yokohama?" she asked.

Jack colored slightly.

"To—to make a fortune, I suppose," he said. "Our family have had the house since 'fifty-four, you know."

Miss Hoyt nodded and smiled.

"We are going to make others rich, Mr. Ely, not ourselves. No more now. Here comes your friend, Mr. Kurosama."

CHAPTER III.

YOKOHAMA.

THE Golden Gate had arrived at Yokohama three days behind time, and the passengers had dispersed in all directions, as is the wont of passengers arrived at their destination.

Meeto Kurosama was carried off from the wharf in a gorgeous gilded sedan-chair, called a *norimon*; Jack Ely went to the house of his uncle, head of the Yokohama branch of the firm of Fish, Ely & Co., while Miss Hoyt and Flora Hastings were met by a sunburnt gentleman who answered to the name of Brother Clark, and who took them off to the Tokio Hotel.

Jack found the house of Fish, Ely & Co. very different from anything he had ever seen in Boston or New York.

The clerks used to begin work about sunrise every morning, it being the hot season; but made up for their early rising by early closing; for work was dropped at noon, and everybody went to sleep till the sun had sloped to within an hour or so of twilight, when the books were made up for the day, and business-letters written.

The house closed at sunset, and every one was allowed after that to do as he pleased.

There was a free-and-easy, happy-go-lucky style about everything, that rather disgusted the young man accustomed to the push and hurry of American business methods.

Money was easily made, and no one seemed to be in a hurry except the coolies, who bore enormous loads about on their heads and howled like demons all the time.

Jack, himself, was not put to work till at his own request, and found his tasks of the easiest description, with frequent counsel from his uncle, Mr. Abijah Ely, "not to work so hard. The climate's different, you know."

Mr. Abijah Ely looked entirely unlike a New Englander, for he was stout and lazy, and his long residence among foreigners had given him all sorts of prejudices rarely found among Americans.

For a little while the novelty of everything delighted Jack, and then he began to see that Yokohama, full as it is of foreigners, the people adopting foreign ways and dress, was no place to see the real Japanese, and he said to his uncle one day:

"Don't you people ever go out here in the evenings among the Japs? I've been here a week and never had occasion to talk a word of anything but English."

Uncle Abijah stretched himself lazily in his arm-chair—it was after dinner—and said in his indifferent way:

"I've been here near thirty years, Jack, and I don't know more than fifty words of the language. What's the use? The Japs pick ours up fast enough, and you can hire an interpreter at fifty cents a day. All I want of the lingo is enough to swear at a coolie now and then, or call a *jin-rickshaw*."

"Yes, but I can talk Japanese."

His uncle stared at him.

"You? Why, where did you learn it?"

"In New Haven, from my chum at Yale, Meeto Kurosama."

Abijah Ely actually sat upright and looked broad awake—a very rare thing with him after dinner.

"Meeto Kurosama did you say?"

"Certainly. We chummed together for four years, and he asked me to come and see him when I got here."

"My dear boy!"

Mr. Ely seemed excited; a rare thing with him.

"Why, do you know such an acquaintance may be worth a cool hundred thousand dollars if you work it right? Why didn't you tell me this before?"

"Because you never asked me. You people here seem to me to be—pardon me—rather listless and devoid of enterprise."

Old Ely smiled.

"You give us a chance to extend business, and see if we're not awake. You don't know the people here. We've gone as far as we can. They tried to open a branch at Hakoladi, but the people wouldn't trade, and we gave it up. It's no use. You can't make these Japs trade if they don't want to. But this thing's different, if you're really a friend of young Kurosama."

"Why, uncle?"

"Why? Confound it, boy, don't you know who his father is?"

"His name is Myamoto, I believe, and he is a powerful *daimio*."

"Powerful! I should say so. Why, Jack, that fellow's income is close on two million *kokas* a year."

"Two million what?" asked Jack, who, although he understood Japanese as his friend spoke it, had no acquaintance with commercial terms.

* *Jin-rick-shaws* are the Japanese equivalents for a London cab, used only by foreigners. The *jin-rick-shaw* is a two-wheeled vehicle, with a hood to raise in wet or hot weather, and a pair of shafts in front. It is drawn by a coolie instead of a horse. The natives ride in *norimons* or litters, with two or four bearers.

"*Kokas* of rice. Big bags, worth about three dollars each. Why, boy, Astor's a fool to him, and Vanderbilt can't be mentioned in the same breath. And you say you chummed in with his son for four years. Why, your fortune's made if you work it right."

"How, uncle?"

"Why, don't you see? We can get all his rice, and do his business. He's an obstinate old Christian-hater, and won't trade; but by Jove, if ever he does—Two million *kokas*, Jack! Think of it! Why, if we could get the selling of that, we could make—Why, it's enough to make a fellow's mouth water."

And the old merchant rubbed his hands in a gleeful manner, and his eyes twinkled in a way that showed the Yankee trading energy to be far from extinct in his bosom, after thirty years of a hot climate.

"And so you're in with young Meeto, are you?" he pursued. "I heard that he was coming back from America, but I never thought about you. What were you doing in college?"

Jack laughed.

"Getting an education, I believe. At least that's what I tried to do."

"Hum! hum! College education all flummery for business. I never had it. Don't see why your father wasted so much time on it."

"In this case it does not seem to have been much of a waste, sir. You say yourself that the acquaintance of Meeto Kurosama is worth a good deal, and—"

"True, true, true. But did they know about it at home?"

"Certainly, sir. Meeto paid more than one visit to our house during vacation, and grew fond of our family."

Uncle Abijah rubbed his hands.

"Good! good! And you say he asked you to come and see him?"

"Certainly, sir. I never intended to go, except out of curiosity—"

"Curiosity be hanged! Do you suppose I live here for curiosity? No, no, my boy, that soon wears off. It's the money keeps me here, and, please the pigs, there's money in young Kurosama, and it's got to come out. Look here, Jack, what do you say to taking a trip into the interior? I'll send a first-class man with you. Talks English as well as I do—"

"You mean, to interpret for me?"

"Certainly. Can't get along without."

"I can, uncle. You forget I can talk the Japanese quite well."

Old Ely looked at him doubtfully.

"Are you sure? I can't, I know."

"Well, try me and see if I don't. I've a good mind to go out to-night and take a ramble through the native quarter of the town, to keep in practice."

Mr. Ely looked horrified.

"At night! A ramble there *alone*! Why, boy, you'd never get back. Some of those devils or *ronins* would cut you into hash in no time at all."

"Indeed? Why I've not seen a man with a sword on since I've been here."

"That's because you haven't been over to Yeddo or Tokio. You'll see lots of them there. Now, my dear boy, you must not think of such a thing. They're quiet in the daytime, and as long as the soldiers and police are round, but it would be a great temptation to some of their swashbucklers to pick a quarrel with you, if you went out alone at night in their part of the town."

Mr. Abijah Ely was a prudent man, but Jack was young, impetuous and very proud of his own abilities in the fighting line.

"Look here, uncle," he said, "where's the Tokio Hotel?"

"That? Oh, it's across the bay in Yeddo, at the edge of the native town. It's where the missionary fellows hang out."

"Well, if they can go there, I can," said Jack, firmly. "I'm going, anyhow. There was a young lady came over with us in the Golden Gate, and I know she went there. I'm going to call on her."

And with that Jack, who was restless and pining for a change, got up as if to go out.

His uncle was horrified.

"Jack, Jack, my dear boy," he pleaded; "don't be so terribly rash. I tell you it's as much as any man's life is worth to go through that place at night. You don't know what it is. At least, if you must go, take some one with you; take Takewaka, for instance. He's a faithful fellow, and knows the ropes."

Takewaka was the interpreter of the house, a stout, chunky fellow, with a perpetual grin on his face.

"Takewaka will show you all that's safe to be shown," urged uncle Bijah; "and he won't let you get into mischief. He values his place too much."

Jack laughed.

"All right. We'll have Takewaka along if you like, but suppose the *samourai* come after us, he's no good at a fight."

"You don't know that, Jack. I've heard it said that Takewaka is quite a famous wrestler in his way."

"All right, uncle. We'll have him along, but I've made up my mind to go through that

town; and to-night's as good as any other time, while I'm in the humor."

But Jack was by no means as rash as his uncle thought, and the warnings he had heard had produced their impression on his mind.

He had determined to go through the native town that night, and he had also made up his mind to go to the Tokio Hotel to see if Flora Hastings were still there; but he had no intention of throwing away his life to please any one.

He had always been fond of fencing and shooting, and had brought with him from America a pair of first-class self-cocking revolvers, with which he could riddle a four-inch circle at thirty feet, as fast as he could pull the triggers.

He had made up his mind also to go in Japanese costume, so as to attract as little notice as possible, with the further advantage that the dress would enable him to wear a sword if he wished.

And swords are plentiful in every shop in Yokohama, for every tourist wants to buy one or two.

Takewaka he knew well; but had little faith in his fighting ability, though the stout interpreter had the air of being strong as a bull; but when Takewaka arrived a little later, and announced himself ready to take the young American on his dangerous trip, Jack reconsidered his opinion.

Takewaka in daylight, short, stout, swaddled in a long dark robe with a broad girdle and a tall paper cap, was a different man from Takewaka at night, ready for fun.

The stout Jap had shipped the tight dress of a coolie, fitted for active exercise, with a rice-straw hat on his head, as thick as a turban, and he wore a short, vicious-looking sword in his sash, while his generally smiling face had assumed a serious but determined air, that made Jack say:

"Well, Takewaka, are you ready for fun?"

Takewaka grinned, and then looked serious. His English was not as good as Meeto's; for he spoke a sort of pigeon English, that he had picked up first in a voyage to Canton.

"Takewaka ready. *'Merican samourai* going to fight, ha?"

He alluded to Jack's dress and weapons.

"Not if I can help it, Takewaka. I shall not be so much noticed in this dress, shall I?"

Takewaka rubbed his nose.

"*'Merican* know best. Don't look like *our samourai* one bit."

Jack was mortified, for he had prided himself on his skill in dressing.

"Why not?" he asked.

Takewaka shrugged his shoulders.

"Hair not right; too light. Every one look and say, white moon try to fool us."

"That is, if they come near enough to look. Well, are you afraid to go with me?"

The interpreter shook his head.

"We fear nothing in our country. I am ready. You ready too?"

"Ay, ay. Go ahead, Takewaka. I want to go to the Tokio Hotel first, and thence into the native town. What is there to be seen there?"

Takewaka grinned.

"Plenty to see, plenty. Theater. Dance. Wrestling. Fighting. All going on."

"We'll see them all, Takewaka. Which way?"

"This way."

And Takewaka preceded him down to the boat-landing of the harbor, from whence they took a *sampan* or small Chinese boat, resembling an American ducking-skiff, and crossed the narrow bay to Yeddo, now called Tokio, the official capital of Japan.

It was the first time Jack had ever seen it, for he had been disappointed in Yokohama on account of the number of foreigners and foreign houses; but he expected to make it all up, now he was going to the unadulterated Japanese article.

He had taken care hitherto to conceal from every one his knowledge of Japanese, and therefore had the pleasure, while in the boat, of listening to the following conversation between Takewaka and the boatman:

BOATMAN—Who have you got there?"

TAKEWAKA (*spitting in the water*)—A Christian barbarian, accursed be his mother's grave!

BOATMAN—Where are you taking him?"

TAKEWAKA—Where should I be taking him, oh, Matabei? I wish it was into the mouth of hell, for the gods to burn him. But you know we have to bow the knee to these foreign hogs till the mikado gives us leave to kill them all. I must take care of him to-night. He wishes to see the sights.

BOATMAN—But what will you do if the *ronin* of the Kuro Ken come out with their swords and hack him to pieces.

TAKEWAKA (*resignedly*)—We are all in the hands of Buddha; but I don't want to commit the happy dispatch* yet awhile. I would talk

* "Happy dispatch" is the meaning of *hara-kiri*. Japanese commit it on the slightest provocation to escape disgrace for having disobeyed an order from a superior.

to them and persuade them. I could never go back without him. I might as well be a dead dog."

Here Jack coughed and said in English:

"What are you talking about, Takewaka?"

The interpreter turned and replied placidly:

"I was asking Matabei where they have the best dancing to-night, and he tells me in the temple of Hoiko Sama."

"Do you ever tell lies, Takewaka?"

Takewaka turned up his eyes to the moon.

"Me tell lies? No, sah, my nation never tell no lie, if we die for it."

Jack could hardly refrain from laughing at the sublime cheek of the Japanese, but he took care not to betray his own secret, which, he began to see, might prove very useful in time; and very soon after they landed in Tokio, and saw broad streets, gas-lamps in the middle, and a string of *jin-rick-shaws* in waiting, with some of the more elaborate *norimons* near by, whose bearers at once began to bowl in competition for custom, as he landed.

He jumped into one, and said to the coolie:

"You talk English?"

The coolie grinned and nodded.

"Iss, iss."

"Tokio Hotel then," said Jack, and in another minute he was bowling away, Takewaka trotting behind the *jin-rick-shaw*.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GARDEN OF HEAVEN.

THE Tokio Hotel was kept by a Japanese Christian in the native manner, and the only people seen there were native converts and the few missionaries who had come there to study the language before going to their posts.

Being a native house, it was dark, dingy, and full of foul odors at night, and when Jack Ely went up to it, he said to himself:

"Heavens! what a change for her to come here."

The *jin-rick-shaw* drove up and he alighted, as Takewaka trotted up, smiling.

Jack had determined to keep his knowledge of Japanese a secret, so he said:

"Call the landlord, Takewaka, and ask if there are any foreign ladies here."

Takewaka began to howl in Japanese:

"Son of a hog, come forth! Oh, Christian swine of a landlord, where art thou?"

An excited Japanese dashed out of the shade of the veranda, and inquired shrilly:

"Who are you calling son of a hog? Do you not know that we Christians laugh at you fools, who believe in crockery images?"

Takewaka immediately put his hand on his sword and roared:

"Son of a hog, I can cut any Christian into little pieces. You're afraid to fight me!"

"What's the matter, Takewaka?" asked Jack in English, fearing a disturbance.

Takewaka turned round.

"Nothing, great lord. The landlord has not yet answered my question. We are but giving good evening to each other."

"Then do it with less noise and look out I don't interfere," said Ely sternly. "How dare you put your hand on your sword?"

The landlord here put in, in English:

"Dis man very bad. Call me pig, great sir. What is your honorable pleasure?"

"To know if you have here two American ladies, who came in the Golden Gate?"

The landlord examined him narrowly.

"You want to see them? You are brother, ha?"

"No. A friend, who came over with them. Here, take this card to them, if they are here."

The landlord smiled broadly.

"They not here—they go yesterday."

"Where? How?" asked Jack, disappointed.

"To Kiroshima in the Kuro Ken, by *norimon*, old lady and girl. Go to Brother Hastings. He live at Kiroshima."

The young man turned away rather ruefully, and said to Takewaka:

"Well, that's over. Now for the town. What's to be seen first?"

He had expected to find Flora there, though he owned that he had no right to look for any such thing, and he felt disappointed, angry and reckless.

"What is there to see?" he repeated, sharply.

Takewaka began to grin.

"Anything—everything. What my noble sir want to see? Fight or girls?—wrestle or play?"

"I don't know. Where is there a public garden where the people go?"

Takewaka looked pleased.

"Aha! We go to the Garden of Heaven, then?"

"And where's that?"

"This way; not far."

Then, as they walked away, having paid the *jin-rick-shaw* coolie, Takewaka said, in a tone of some caution:

"We keep in dark—no show your hair, and no one know us. If rude fellow come, leave him to me; no say a word. Takewaka take care of you."

"Thank you, for nothing. I can take care

of myself, I hope. What is this Garden of Heaven, Takewaka?"

"Great place. Dance, fight, drink, get *saki*, tea, anything," said Takewaka, eagerly. "See yonder the lamps!"

In fact, Jack began to see ahead of him a dark grove of very large trees, through the foliage of which shone strings of lanterns. The sounds of music and the buzzing of a crowd showed that something was going on, of which the *tum-tumming* of tambourines and kettle-drums, the twanging of Japanese guitars, and the shrill squeaking of the native fiddles, like cats on a fence, gave an idea that was decidedly queer to a foreign ear like Jack's.

Mindful of his determination to pretend to be a greenhorn and find out what sort of a man Takewaka was, he said, hurriedly:

"Here, take this dollar and pay our way in. Show me what there is to be seen."

Takewaka tucked away the dollar in his sash, well pleased; for he knew the admission fee to the "Garden of Heaven" to be about three cents.

He had plenty of Japanese coppers about him, and in a few minutes Jack Ely found himself in a real Japanese tea-garden, surrounded by all the picturesque people of whom he had only caught glimpses hitherto.

There were fat rice-merchants, in long robes, with the highest of artificial bald foreheads and the brightest of colored silk sashes; stalwart, good-humored coolies in their best clothes, come to s p tea at the little tables and look at the stage; young bloods of Tokio in silk robes, with the sword in the sash that Jack had hardly ever seen in Yokohama—real *samurai* at last.

Most of them were young fellows, polite and smiling to every one, with a courtly dignity about them that was very striking; but every now and then a big burly fellow with a fierce face, would pass among the tables, in whom Jack recognized the swashbuckler type of which he had heard so often, the man ready to pick a quarrel at all times.

But although armed men were seen on every side, every one was so excessively courteous to every one else, that Jack asked Takewaka:

"Where is all the danger of which they told me? It seems quiet enough here?"

Takewaka nodded.

"All right here, oh sau" (sir). "Police here. You see them? Shoot quick."

And he indicated quite a strong sprinkling of men, in a half European dress, with spiked Prussian helmets, blue coats and—*bare legs and feet*—who were moving about in the crowd, with cavalry revolvers in their belts and swords besides, while they carried big staves in their hands.

They were all pleasant, good-humored fellows, evidently from the lower classes; and Jack noticed that the proud *samurai* scowled at them whenever their backs were turned, and looked as if they would have liked to pick a quarrel with them had they dared.

"The men with the swords seem to hate the police," he observed to Takewaka. "Why is it?"

Takewaka grinned rather proudly.

"Dat because the police no *samurai*, oh sau. You know, before white people came, only *samurai* have right to wear swords, and the *skizoku*—you call them nobles—twoswords. Now the law let every one wear as many sword as he like, and common fellow like me put them on and fight. *Samurai* not like that. Police all common fellow like me, but *samurai* afraid of pistol—ha?"

Indeed they seemed to be, and the police seemed also to know that they were in a ticklish place, for Jack noticed that they kept within sight of each other, and had a code of silent signals.

Presently he began to wish he could get among the people more, and hear what they were saying, so he said to Takewaka:

"Let us go near the stage. What is it they are doing over there?"

The stage was a platform in the open air, raised to a level with the eyes of the spectators, as they sat on benches all round it, and a very wonderful drama was being enacted on the boards, without the aid of any scenery whatever.

Jack went and sat down among the rest of the people, taking care, as Takewaka had advised, to keep in the shadow as much as possible, to hide his light, close-cropped hair.

Of course the people near him saw at once that he was no Japanese; but they were all exceedingly polite, and pretended not to notice him, while those at a distance either did not see him or pretended not to.

Presently, as Jack looked round, he began to see that he was not the only foreigner in the crowd, for there were several light heads, and more than one mustache or side-whiskers that oddly contradicted the Japanese costume. A few were even in European dress.

"Who are those men?" he asked Takewaka.

The coolie looked sour.

"Foreign people in Mikado's service. Call them all same as our people. Not so."

"Do they talk Japanese then?"

Takewaka shrugged his shoulders.

"S'pose so."

Then, in his own tongue, he added to a man who stood beside him:

"The curse of all the gods on these Christian interlopers, that come to steal away our country from us."

"What's that you're saying, Takewaka?" asked Jack, pretending not to understand him.

Takewaka became all smiles instantly.

"I was telling my friend, Musashi, that I wished we had more of you gentlemen here, for Japan is becoming a wonderful country very fast, oh sau."

Jack could hardly help bursting out laughing at the sublime impudence of the lie, but he kept his countenance and amused himself by listening to what was going on around him on all sides, catching scraps of conversation.

He noticed, however, that Takewaka and the coolies were the only ones who used any opprobrious language toward the Christians, while the young *samurai*, who were sitting all round sipping tea or *saki* (rice brandy) and smoking, never so much as alluded to the subject, but conversed about the merits of the actors on the stage and prominent fencing-masters and wrestlers, of whom they seemed to be enthusiastic admirers.

And all this time the stage performance was going on, the actors were ranting to their hearts' content, and no one seemed to be paying more than the slightest attention to them, till Jack, for sheer curiosity to find what it was all about, fixed his attention on the stage and tried to make out the story.

It turned out to be the fortunes of a certain very wonderful woman called Kijin O'Matz, who, having been the daughter of a robber chief who had been killed by the Governor of a province, became head of a band herself, and set out to avenge her father and recover his sword, which had been taken from him at his death.

The whole plot turned on the recovery of her father's sword, which she at last finds in the possession of a handsome gentleman, with whom she has fallen in love and whom she has married.

The struggle in the girl's mind between love for the father of her child and the religious duty of avenging her own father's death on the man who slew him, was painted with considerable skill by the boy who acted Kijin O'Matz; for there were no women on the stage. Finally it comes out that Kijin's husband has also been looking for some one to punish, for the sword on which the story turned had originally belonged to his father, and Kijin's father had taken it from him.

Finally Kijin, weary of the struggle, ends it in a truly Japanese manner by the process of *hara-kiri*, artistically executed, and dies amid the tears of all beholders, an example of devotion to duty.

Spite of himself Jack felt interested toward the close of the play, the boy's acting being very good indeed, and said to Takewaka, unwarily:

"Kijin O'Matz! It seems a pity she should have to die, isn't it?"

Takewaka stared and his eyes dilated.

"What? You understand it, oh sau?"

Jack shook his head hastily.

"No, no, not to say understand it, but the acting was so good I could make out some of the story. I heard them call her Kijin O'Matz."

Takewaka seemed relieved.

"Oh yes. Dat very prettee play, oh sau; but nothing to the next."

"The next! What, are they going to have another already? When?"

"Right away, oh sau. Keep it up all night. Some play last a week."

Jack had heard before of Chinese plays of this enormous length; but he had no idea that the Japanese indulged in the same amusement.

He was convinced that Takewaka was right a moment later, when on the stage came a procession of men in armor, made of paper, or rather of heavy pasteboard, following two huge banners, each of which was held over the head of a gaudily-dressed personage, with two swords and the air of a chief.

"What's this?" he asked Takewaka in a whisper, noticing that every one in the garden began for the first time to attend to the business before them.

Takewaka's eyes glistened.

"It's the great play of the Shizoku."

"The Shizoku? What's that?"

"What you call 'two sword.' See, oh sau, I tell you. Those two men great man—great *daimio*—you say prince. One call Kurosama—"

"What?" asked Jack, amazed.

"Kurosama—great *daimio*—live in Kuseu—the other call Shimatz—great *daimio*—in the court—Kuambaku—you say man with hawk."

"Grand Hawker, you mean?"

"Iss, iss, oh sau. You see now. Kurosama richer than Shimatz; but Shimatz got big place and, see—they fight."

In fact the two processions of retainers, with their lords at the head, after passing each other several times, showing very plainly the jeal-

ousies of rival clans, had finally come to a place where two posts were set up.

The stage manager, whose business it was to explain the story as it progressed in dumbshow, came out and said to the audience with a deep salaam:

"Most noble princes, lords and gentlemen, this is supposed to be a narrow street, where the great lords, Hiroaki Kurosama and Hidyoro Shimatz, meet together without room to pass. The question is, which shall give way. Hiroaki has the oldest family, but Hidyoro is Grand Falconer to the Son of Heaven. We shall see."

Then he drew aside and the processions met between the posts, while every one in the audience seemed interested.

Hiroaki walked on and waved his fan to his rival, as much as to say "Get out of the way," when Hidyoro at once drew his sword and cried out:

"Give me the street, oh Kurosama, in the name of the mikado."

Hiroaki seemed to be angry at this, for he retorted fiercely:

"Shimatz is a wise man to shelter behind the mikado's name. I yield to the Son of Heaven, but this is for Shimatz."

And with that he struck his rival in the face with his fan, fearless of the sword, and the next moment Shimatz stabbed him through the breast, and the proud *daimio* fell on the stage, apparently dead.

The whole thing looked so natural that Jack found himself half rising in his excitement, and the action seemed to set the audience frantic; for half the young men rose up and began to shout the war-cries of the two clans, so that Jack thought a free fight was imminent about nothing.

At that moment Takewaka pulled his sleeve and beckoned him to sit down.

CHAPTER V.

OLD DOUBLE SWORD.

Takewaka looked disturbed.

"Sit down," he said. "Only play. Sit down. No real fight. Make believe dead."

But if it was "make believe dead," Jack had to admit it was very good make believe, and when the clansmen of the two *daimios*, at the death of their master, began to fight together, the pretense was still more deceptive, for it seemed to Jack they were using real swords and hitting to hurt each other.

The young *samurai* in the audience seemed to be delighted with the quarrel, for they kept on their feet, shouting alternately:

"Well done, Kurosama!"

"Hit hard, Shimatz!"

"Kurosama forever!"

"Shimatz! Shimatz!"

It was evident that their partisanship was strongly excited; and Jack also saw that the Kurosama party was the strongest, and that the death of the proud prince had excited the sympathies of the majority.

The free fight on the stage went on with such ferocity that Jack asked Takewaka:

"Who are those men? Not common actors, surely?"

Takewaka shook his head.

"No, no. This great play, the Shizoku. Every one want to play in it. Great fencing-master go among those *samurai*. Try to wound each other. See. Kurosama get the best."

In fact, the Kurosama party, in a very short time after the death of their chief, drove the Shimatz retainers over the railing, down among the spectators, and raised a wild yell of exultation at the victory, when Shimatz himself, as if unable to survive the disgrace of being conquered, committed *hara-kiri* before the audience so naturally that Jack was startled as the actor dropped apparently dead, and asked Takewaka:

"Is that all the play? Why, it's short."

Takewaka shook his head.

"Oh no, you see very soon. Sons take up the fight for father."

In fact, the Kurosama clan very soon left the stage, flaunting their banners in triumph, but howling over the body of their chief, and pretty soon after the Shimatz men came in again, headed by a boy, who was introduced by the stage manager thus:

"Most noble princes and lords, this young lord is Tokichiro Shimatz, who has come to take up his father's body. See him!"

The young man came in and howled aloud over his father's body, till he found that the Kurosama men, besides conquering old Shimatz, had taken away his sword.

This intolerable disgrace seemed to affect all the retainers deeply, for they all got together, went down on their knees, and took an oath to get back the sword and retrieve the honor of the Shimatz clan, or all get killed.

Then they vacated the stage, and the young man who had become the head of the Kurosama clan, came on, and began to brag about his father's wonderful family, ending by gloating over the fact that Shimatz had lost his nobility by losing the family sword, which he—Kurosama—would henceforth wear with his own.

From this time forth the drama went on with

marvelous rapidity, the stage-manager introducing, inside of half an hour, nine successive generations of Kurosamas and Shimatzes, who kept up the quarrel and killed each other or committed *hara-kiri* with such gusto that the young *samurai* in the audience were delighted, while Jack, who saw the humorous aspect of the whole quarrel, could hardly refrain from laughing aloud at the play.

Finally the celebrated sword, about which so much fuss was made, came on the stage, along with the equally celebrated ancestral blade of the Kurosamas, in the hands of a member of the latter clan, who offered to settle the matter, once for all, by fighting any two *samurai* the Shimatz might send against him. If they killed him, the feud was to end by restoring the sword. If he killed them, the Shimatz clan agreed to commit *hara-kiri*, one and all.

This truly Japanese agreement seemed to excite the audience greatly, and Jack asked:

"What's going on, Takewaka?"

Takewaka, as much excited as the rest, gave a hurried explanation, adding:

"That man great master, great warrior, oh, sau. He act the Shizoku to-night for once, and they have great master against him. No play dis time. Fight hard."

Jack heard the stage manager a little later come out and say:

"Most noble princes and lords, this is the celebrated master warrior, Old Double Sword, and he will be opposed by the masters of the sword, Musashi and Matuske, with the sharp weapon, for this night only, by the permission of the Government. Blood will flow, and the conqueror be pardoned."

Jack could hardly believe his eyes when he saw on the stage the identical personage who had been on the deck of the pirate *lorcha* a few days before, and yet he felt it was the same and heard the people yell:

"Double Sword forever!"

He had a good opportunity of inspecting the warrior, and saw a man over six feet high, thin in frame, but broad of shoulder, wiry and active, with gray hair and a pointed gray beard, that showed him not to be of Japanese race, though his face was dark as any there. But what surprised Jack most was that the eyes of this champion were decidedly light blue or gray, as he scanned the multitude, for such eyes had an unmistakably western aspect.

Old Double Sword, whoever he was, had come prepared for work, stripped to the waist, and wearing black Japanese trunk hose and a broad silk sash, while his feet were bare and his two swords still sheathed.

His opponents were both powerful men, but too fat for western notions of a contest, and their smooth, olive faces and dark eyes contrasted forcibly with Double Sword's aspect.

Musashi and Matuske had one sword each, and they looked eager and anxious as they came up on the platform, while the people around hushed into the silence of eager expectation.

Jack edged near to one of the Europeans present with himself and whispered:

"Excuse me, sir. I'm a stranger; but, tell me, is it possible those men are going to fight with sharp swords?"

The other man—he was an interpreter to one of the legations—looked surprised as he answered:

"Why, certainly. But, excuse me; have you no one to take care of you here?"

"To take care of me?" echoed Jack. "Why?"

"Why? It is hardly safe for one who does not know the ropes to be out when this breaks up. This is a play, but they always introduce a real fight into it at this point, and the *samurai* are apt to get excited after it."

"Why? What for?"

"Because this Double Sword is a foreigner," said the interpreter in a low tone. "Didn't you ever hear of him? No one knows exactly of what country he is a native, but he has been here since 'sixty-five, and he regularly kills or maims two fencing-masters in this play every time the Government permits it. Then the *samurai* are apt to attack us as we go home."

Jack was surprised.

"Then why do you come here, sir?"

The interpreter smiled.

"We serve the Government and have to maintain our dignity. Nothing a Jap despises like a coward. Now you're here, sir, stay near us. We might have to fight our way home. Ah, look! the fun begins now!"

The stage-manager came on the platform again, reintroduced the combatants, and cried:

"To the fight, noble *samurai*, for the honor of our lord, the mikado!"

Instantly the three men drew their swords, "Old Double Sword" taking one in each hand, and the fight began at once.

Jack could not help sharing the general excitement. It was his first view of a full, earnest, gladiatorial contest, and he saw at once that it was going to be a desperate one.

The two Japanese were very powerful men, with resolute, fearless faces, and they moved with a vigor and caution that showed they had not undervalued the task before them in the tall stranger.

Old Double Sword, on the other hand, wore a slight scornful smile on his lip, as if he felt sure of his victory, and stood with his arms out and both swords crossed at an angle above his head, so as to guard it completely on both sides, his left foot slightly advanced, his body bent forward.

Musashi and Matuske slowly crept forward, not touching their swords to those of their antagonist, but separating as they went, so as to get to either side of him.

He allowed them to do this till they got opposite to each other, when both sprung in simultaneously and began to shower blows on him with a ferocity and skill there seemed to be no hope of evading.

They cut high and low, first at his head, next at his feet, right and left alternately, not caring for their guards, while he, with both swords, foiled them at every turn with such ease that Jack was amazed.

A moment later, with a huge spring Old Double Sword was back out of danger, while Musashi and Matuske, in their excitement, nearly cut each other.

Before they could recover and separate again, Old Double Sword changed his tactics and attacked:

With a tiger-leap he got behind Musashi so as to bring the two swordmasters in a line, and ran in on them, smiting with his two swords, just as a boxer smites with his two fists, guarding or striking with either indifferently.

To the amazement of Jack, amid the yells of the excited *samurai* in the audience, this one man actually drove his two foes back in confusion, unable to separate as before, one always a little in advance of the other, while Old Double Sword leaped from side to side, threatening and smiting with either hand, till Jack saw that he had hit both his antagonists repeatedly, but only with the back of his swords, seeming to be indued with an activity perfectly marvelous.

Presently Musashi stumbled and fell over a crevice in the bamboo flooring, and in the same moment Old Double Sword, uttering a shout in deep European tones, very different from the shrill accents of the Japanese, plied Matuske with blow on blow, only half of which was the fencing-master able to guard, spanking him with the flat of his sword in a way that drew shouts of laughter from the audience, till he finally knocked the sword flying from Matuske's hand, and drove him off the platform, prodding him in the rear with his point, totally heedless of the beaten warrior.

Matuske, amid the jeers of the people, leaped the railing and hid himself in the crowd, when Musashi in his turn came in for his drubbing.

The fencing-master had picked up the sword knocked out of Matuske's hand, and tried hard to defend himself with two, like Old Double Sword; but the tall man came at him with such a tempest of cuts that he was driven back to the railing, every one in the audience yelling to him to fight better, and finally, in sheer inability to face such a man, ducked under the railing and tumbled into the crowd below, safe but humiliated.

Then Old Double Sword made a profound salute to the crowd, in a style that reminded Jack of a French fencing-master, save that it was executed with both hands.

That done, he retired, and the stage manager came out with his usual salaam, crying:

"Most noble princes and lords, the clan of Shimatz will now commit happy dispatch, which will end the play, and be followed by the affecting drama of the Divided Lovers."

Then Jack's new friend whispered to him:

"Now come along. My name's Jackson, and I belong to the American embassy. We'll need to get home pretty soon."

Jack looked round him and saw that trouble was brewing.

The *samurai* were whispering together, and casting dark glances at the Europeans, while the police had vanished.

"Where are the police?" he asked. "They were here a moment ago."

Jackson smiled rather dubiously.

"They've gone. You must know this is a peculiar night. Every one knows Old Double Sword not to be a Japanese, and he has just disgracefully beaten the best two men in Tokio, without giving them the consolation of being wounded. Their friends are going to have revenge on us, and the police have just pretended it was necessary to relieve guard, to give them a chance. Come!"

So saying he got up, and Jack followed him through the crowd, where the other foreigners were gathering together, till there were a good fifteen of them, all well armed, and carrying pistols.

They were principally Germans, English and Americans; some army officers, instructors in the European tactics; some engineers and men employed in the arms factory; one or two navy officers, and the interpreter, Jackson.

Young Ely looked round for Takewaka, and saw that redoubtable personage, looking pale and scared, and backing away to the garden gate, while the *samurai* especially the grown men of fighting type, were frowning and

muttering to each other, as they eyed the little cohort of foreigners.

It was a big Prussian who said first:

"Now, *meinen herren*—shentlemens, we go forward. If it be fight, try sword first and keep pistol for last. Forward!"

They had gathered into a compact body of men in pairs, one behind the other, and at the word each put one hand on the shoulder of his file leader and started off at quick-step for the gate, treading in unison.

The big men were at the head, and the force of the deep column, all pushing together, parted the crowd to either side, like a plow running a furrow.

Then the row began in a moment, as the young *samurai* were shoved aside like babies, and they began to call out angrily:

"Why do you hurry so, foreign devils? Have you no manners? Where do you go?"

Every now and then came a howl of pain.

The foreigners had boots, and the Japanese were barefooted, having left their clogs under their seats when they started up.*

The foreigners, pretending to see nothing, went tramping on, treading on toes, and had nearly reached the garden gate, when they heard a savage yell, and a band of fierce *ronins*, with blackened faces, rushed at them, sword in hand, resolute to exterminate them.

In a moment, without thinking of what he was doing, Jack Ely had drawn his two self-cocking revolvers, and blazed away into the breasts of the infuriated men, with such unexpected accuracy that four of them dropped and the rest paused, long enough to enable the Europeans to gain the gate and emerge into the broad street.

"Forward! Quick! Double! March!" cried the Prussian officer excitedly. "We haf no time to lose."

And he set the example by trotting off, the rest following, and each man drawing a pistol and sword as he went.

They had indeed no time to lose, for, as soon as the *samurai* saw them begin to run, they burst into a loud yell and followed, sword in hand, howling out curses.

They ran fast too, and it was not long before they came up and passed the fugitives, striving to intercept and drive them back, till nearly a hundred men were before them, still running.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STREET FIGHT.

To Jack Ely it resembled one of his old college fights between students and people in the streets of New Haven, save that the enemy now wore swords and meant murder. The Japanese seemed afraid to close, and the foreigners kept them off by pointing pistols at them, till the *samurai* ahead plucked up courage to turn resolutely, when a rattling volley was fired, which cleared the way at once. The men ahead melted from the path, all but a few of the most resolute, who came on, sword in hand.

The next moment, hand-to-hand fighting was going on, Jack found himself firing the last loads in one of his pistols and laying about him with his sword, opposed to several men, who were cutting like devils.

His pistol rid him of three; then the click of the hammer told him it was empty; and he instinctively thrust it into his belt and kept his sword on guard as well as he could.

He found that the Japanese cut well and gave him all he could do, till the sound of shots all round him told him that his friends were firing fast, and he was freed for a moment. Then he saw a sword on the ground by him, dropped by a wounded man; picked it up, and felt more secure, after the feats he had seen performed by Old Double Sword on the stage.

For a moment there was a lull in the fight, and then a fresh crowd of *samurai* came down, yelling "Shimatz! Shimatz!" drove in the little band of Europeans, and the whole became mingled in a confused mass of struggling bodies, clashing swords and occasional pistol-shots.

Soon these last ceased, and the sound of the Japanese yelling overpowered everything else, while the Europeans, driven back to a wall, set themselves only to keep their heads as best they might.

The crowd of dark faces closed in round them; one man—the big Prussian—had gone down, and was being hacked to pieces; and Jack Ely had all he could do to keep from going under, when a deeper-toned shout came down the street from the quarter opposite the garden, and the savage *samurai* paused in their work, as if to listen.

* The foot-wear in Japan varies in different places and conditions. Ladies and high-caste men wear stockings of cloth or silk with a cleft for the great toe, and over these straw sandals. Common people go barefoot or wear sandals. All classes wear, for wet weather or a long walk, wooden clogs, with a block of wood two inches high under heel and toe alike, the whole fastened by a single thong over the instep and between the toes.

Nobles at court sometimes wear Chinese shoes, but clogs and sandals are more general. The clogs are slipped off in the house and when the wearer is at rest.

In another moment the cry arose in the rear:

"Double Sword! Double Sword! Run! Run!"

Then, to Jack Ely's great relief, but greater amazement, the crowd in front, who had been pressing them so savagely, desisting danger, drew back and began to melt away, as the tall form of Old Double Sword, followed by a double file of men, all armed as he was himself, came trotting down the street, with measured pace, smiting on all sides, and drove the *samurai* out into the side streets like a flock of sheep.

Ely saw him pass with his men, the crew of the very *lorcha* that had interested him so much, and then pass on, not noticing the little band, till he was out of sight.

As for Jack, he had received a slight clip on one thigh that had barely drawn the blood; but he was pretty well tired out with his desperate fighting and observed to Jackson, as he tried to reload his pistol:

"Well, I didn't believe these Japs were anything but quiet, peaceable folks, but I shall always respect their fighting abilities now. They're regular devils."

Jackson was bleeding from a cut in the forehead, and he tied his handkerchief round it as he said rather ruefully:

"It's the same way every year; and the worst of it is we have to keep it *dayboon*. We can't complain of it, and they won't, for fear of being looked on as cowards. It's where their spite comes out against us, when they get a chance, which is not often."

"But why can't you complain?"

"Because we had no business in the native quarter. We go at our own risk on this night, but the *daimios* taunt us so if we don't go, that we have to do it for shame."

"Will there be any more danger?"

"Not to-night. We can get home now. But we got the worst of it."

"How do you mean?"

"Kurosama, you know, is the biggest man in the empire now, and he lets the fight go on just twenty minutes. Then he orders in Double Sword and his men to clear the streets, and they report what they see."

"Then that's why the *samurai* don't fight back."

"Ay, ay. Three-fourths of them were Kurosama men, and they didn't dare fight the *ronins* of Double Sword. So we shall be reported as driven to the wall and one man down, as he passed. It's too bad."

Jackson seemed to be so excessively vexed that Ely asked:

"But what of it? They were twenty to one."

"That makes no difference. We used our firearms too early, and they'll have the laugh on us. They're queer people."

"I should say so. But what made Double Sword drive them off?"

"So that no one might say he had failed to rescue foreigners in danger."

"But some one told me he hated foreigners, and had killed numbers of them."

Jackson shook his head.

"No. I know that's the prevalent opinion among the missionaries. He don't like them. But it don't stand to reason that he, a foreigner, should kill his own people. I don't know the man who fully understands old Double Sword. There's a good deal of mystery about him."

Here one of the Germans came up to say:

"Colonel Schmidt's hurt badly. They've cut his forearm nearly in two, and he's fainted from loss of blood. Some one must get a *norimon* to take him home."

"I'll go," said Jack at once. "My pistols are all right again."

"I'll go with you," put in Jackson. "You don't understand the language yet."

Jack was about to say he did, but thought better of it. His pretended greenness had stood him well that night.

So he answered:

"Much obliged to you. Perhaps we shall also find my man, Takewaka."

They went down the street, now deserted and silent as the grave.

The *samurai*, lately ruffling along with their swords, had vanished, and Jackson said, as they went:

"A great change in Tokio since 1868. They used to have street fights in broad daylight between rival clans, and now the only occasion on which you'll ever see anything like the old times is at night, when they play the *Shizoku* for New Year."

"Then, is this New Year?" asked Jack.

"Yes, their New Year, when they clean house and keep up the old customs. It's the only outlet the Government gives them now. We're getting them tamed down slowly. Ah! there's a lot of men with *norimons*."

They heard the chattering of coolies down by the water-side, and found the *norimons* and *jirik-shaws* as usual.

One of the former was quickly hired, and sent to fetch away the wounded man, when Ely heard a voice exclaim:

"It is my noble sau! Oh! how I fought for you, great lord; and I was about to commit happy dispatch, when your voice revived me!"

And there was Takewaka, groveling at his feet, knocking his forehead on the ground, and generally conducting himself like a spaniel begging forgiveness.

Jack looked at him sternly.

"Where did you go to when the fighting began?" he asked.

Takewaka bumped his head on the ground.

"Oh, sau, I cannot tell a lie. I strove to join your lordship, but my fears were too great, and the angry *samurai* threatened to cut the ears off any common fellow who should dare use a sword. So I ran."

"Get up, then," said Ely, contemptuously.

"You're a great protection, are you not? Call a boat, and we'll go back to Yokohama. Good-evening, Mr. Jackson—unless you want me to help?"

"No, no," replied Jackson cordially. "I told you there was no more danger now. You have had your initiation in the old customs of Japan. Hereafter you can walk the streets safely for a year more."

Ely bid him good-by, and was ferried across the bay to Yokohama, where he found his uncle, waiting anxiously for him, having heard the sound of shots in the stillness of the night.

"Bless my soul! I thought you'd been in a fight," he exclaimed.

"So I was," said Jack quietly.

"A fight! A real fight with those devils of *samurai*, Jack, and alive yet! You don't say so! I must complain to our consul at once. The Government will punish the men for us. The rascals!"

"On the contrary, uncle, you'll do no such thing, for me. I'm not hurt, and I don't want any one punished. Besides, it's *dayboon* for us all as well as them."

"*Dayboon*!" exclaimed Mr. Abijah Ely. "What the dickens do you know of *dayboon*, and you only a week in Japan?"

"Enough to know that our honor as foreigners is involved in our keeping the secret of to-night," said Jack, lightly. "Uncle 'Bijah, don't ask any more questions. Here I am, and I'm not hurt."

His uncle followed him into the house, saying:

"Bless my soul! How lucky Takewaka was with you to-night. He's a good man to have with one."

"Very good, indeed," said Jack dryly.

He had made up his mind that Takewaka might be made useful to him, so long as he did not know that his master could understand Japanese, and it did him good to hear the way the cunning rascal would abuse the foreigners in his native tongue, and then turn round and lie like a trooper in English, pretending the greatest affection for them.

So that he did not betray the secret of the coolie's cowardice to his uncle, but said, with a glance at Takewaka:

"Yes, yes. Takewaka's a very useful man. I shall have to take him with me wherever I go, uncle."

Mr. Abijah Ely rubbed his hands.

"I told you so, I told you so. Takewaka's the best man I ever had. And what did you see, John, what did you see?"

John told him about the play, but kept away all the particulars of the fighting after it, and completely mystified his uncle, who retired to rest with the conviction that Mr. Takewaka had behaved like a hero, and kept his nephew out of all danger, as he had promised to do.

Next morning Jack found the cut on his thigh rather painful, so that he walked a little lame, and had to undergo a good deal of questioning from his fellow-clerks, who were of the cautious kind, chiefly bent on making money in the easiest possible manner, and averse to expeditions to Tokio.

He parried their questions as well as he could, and in the afternoon went over to Tokio, where he visited the American embassy, and found his new friend Jackson with a big strip of black plaster on his forehead, reposing awhile.

Jackson seemed to be in better spirits that day, and told him that they had better luck than he expected.

The wound of Colonel Schmidt had turned out not so severe as was at first thought, and the foreigners had killed outright seven of the *samurai*, besides wounding nearly twenty more.

"And the best of it all is," said Jackson, "that not one of the dead men was shot. It makes a great difference in their ideas of our pluck whether we use swords or firearms. It is kept *dayboon*, of course, but already they are talking of challenging us to a fair fight with equal numbers next New Years. The point of honor has to be settled yet. Queer people, Mr. Ely."

"Very queer," assented Jack. "By-the-by, can you tell me anything of Meeto Kurosama? He came over in the Golden Gate with me, but I've not seen him since. Yet the Kurosama men were all there last night. Who headed them?"

Jackson considered awhile.

"He may have been there himself. It is not an uncommon thing for Japanese gentlemen of high rank to go about incognito among the people for fun. But if he was there last night he kept very quiet."

"Yes. I know him well enough, and I didn't see him at all."

Jackson looked surprised.

"You know him, you say?"

"Yes. He was at Yale College, and we were cums together."

The interpreter looked still more surprised and interested.

"Indeed? Then possibly you learned a little of his language from him."

"A good deal—that is of literary Japanese—I don't pretend to talk the common speech."

"So much the better," returned Jackson.

"Why, do you know, that acquaintance ought to be worth a good deal to you, Mr. Ely?"

"So my uncle says. You know our house, Fish, Ely & Co.?"

"Certainly, very old house, highly respected. He is a sensible man. Why, sir, do you know, not one foreigner in a hundred here understands the high-caste Japanese, and they want interpreters badly at all the embassies."

Ely smiled.

"Thank you for nothing. My uncle tells me that interpreters can be got for fifty cents a day."

"Yes—of the coolie cast—oh, yes. Those fellows are common; but, bless you, they can't read diplomatic Japanese; don't know it when they hear it, and are no more use than a Fulton Market fish-peddler would be in a Fifth Avenue drawing-room. Can you read the high caste writing?"

"Yes, pretty well. Meeto taught me both that and the common style."

Jackson seemed delighted.

"My dear sir, you can command a salary at any embassy here, and they would jump at you in the foreign office for a hundred and fifty dollars a month."

Jack smiled.

"Thank you. It does not tempt me. I am better off where I am. But tell me, do you know anything of the old prince Myamoto Kurosama?"

Jackson nodded.

"Ay, ay. Hard old nut to crack. Used to be the worst Christian-hater in the empire, after old Shimatz."

"Shimatz! I thought that was a fancy name in that play last night?"

"So it is, for a family name. But for all that, it is the first name of the Prince of Satsuma, Kurosama's great rival. They hate each other like poison; but I guess they hate us still worse. You see the play represents an old legend, and the clan of Shimatz was really exterminated, about two hundred years ago, in the way you saw on the stage. But since the deposal of the Tycoon, old Shimatz of Satsuma has been sulky and quarreling with everybody, and it is he who has got the privilege, every year, of introducing a real fight at the end of the play, in the hope of reversing the verdict of history. It's a curious point of honor; but you'll find such things in Japan and nowhere else."

"But why was he called Shimatz?"

"Just to spite old Kurosama, I believe, and give himself a pretext for fighting him. Those Satsuma men have always been noted as the quarrelsome ones, since the foundation of the family. But since Kurosama has hired Old Double Sword, Satsuma begins to see that his spite is of no avail, and Kurosama is beginning to find out that it does not pay to fight Christians."

Jack went away, very thoughtful, at what he had heard. He wondered more than ever, who was this mysterious Old Double Sword.

CHAPTER VII.

A BRILLIANT OFFER.

It was a few days after this that Jack Ely was beckoned by his uncle into the private office of the firm, and the old man said to him confidentially:

"Now, Jack, my boy, didn't you tell me that you had an invitation to go and see your friend, young Prince Kuro-ama?"

"Yes, sir, but I don't like to do it."

"Why not, why no, boy?"

"Because, sir, till I came here, I did not know that he was one of the richest princes in this empire. It might look as if I was pushing myself to take advantage of such a mere general invitation as that."

Mr. Abijah protruded his lips.

"Pooh! You're too scrupulous. Business is business. One has to push, to do anything in this world. Look here! Why don't you pay him a visit? I'll pay all the expenses, and send you in style. It shall not be supposed you hold a clerkship in this house. You shall go as my nephew, as an equal partner in the house, sir, by Jove. What do you think of that?"

Jack flushed slightly.

"Oh, nonsense, uncle. You can't mean it."

Uncle Bijah drew him closer to whisper:

"I do mean it, and the whole firm will back

me. You shall have an equal share with myself. You know there are only four in the firm now, the two Fishes in Frisco, myself and Mr. Barker. He's the Co. Well, we did three millions of business last year, and cleared six hundred thousand profit. We're likely to do as well this year, anyhow, and you shall be fifth partner—IF—"

Mr. Abijah laid a strong emphasis on the "if" and Jack asked:

"If what, uncle?"

"If you get old Kurosama's trade. I told you that his revenue was two million *kokas* of rice, didn't I? Well, he doesn't sell a bag. He just pays it out in kind to his *saimios* and *samourai*, no matter what the price happens to be. We could take his whole crop, pay him market price for it, and make at least ten per cent profit on the concern."

"But how can I do that for you?"

Mr. Abijah frowned and pished.

"Confound it, boy, you needn't be so stupid. You have the inside track and a fortune within your grasp, and you won't see it. How old are you, John Ely?"

"Twenty-three, sir."

"Yes. Twenty-three; and here comes a chance you won't get again if you live to be gray. I tell you I'd jump at it if I had it. And as for your age! John Ely, do you know I was a mere clerk, on five hundred dollars a year, when I was eleven years older than you, sir, and here I offer you a chance of nearly a hundred thousand a year and yet you hesitate."

Jack's face flushed slightly.

"I don't hesitate at that, sir."

"At what then?"

"At my own powers, sir. I don't know how to go at it."

Uncle Bijah looked relieved.

"Oh, is that it? Very proper feeling. Very proper. Like to see young men modest. I was modest myself as a youth. Hem! I may say I owe my success in life to my modesty. But there is such a thing as being too modest. Young men should have proper ambition in life. See here; do you want to get married some day?"

Jack laughed rather awkwardly.

"Well, no, uncle; never thought of it. In fact, I'm having a jolly time enough, as it is."

The old man blew his nose violently.

"Hum! hal very good. No nonsense like being in love. Very proper of course. But, at the same time, my boy, I wish to point out to you that, if you succeed in this enterprise, you'll be rich enough to marry any woman you take a fancy to. Something in that, hey?"

Jack smiled slightly.

"So are you, uncle; but I notice you're a bachelor yet."

Uncle Bijah colored and looked vexed.

"I'm an old man," he said with an accent of something very like sadness, "an old man, Jack. My money came too late to do me me any good—too late, too late. Don't ask why I didn't get married. There was a time—Never mind, boy, never mind."

Jack was surprised. He had looked on his uncle, short, stout, clean-shaven and snug in appearance, as the last man in the world ever to have had a romance; yet here he had stumbled on one, all unawares, and it affected him more than he could have believed possible.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "for my careless speaking. I did not know—"

"Never mind, never mind," returned the old merchant a little huskily. "It's all right, Jack. You're my next of kin. I'll tell you about it some day. It's an old story now. Your father knows it. He never told you, did he? I suppose not, I suppose not."

"Never, sir, or I should not have ventured on a joke. I'll do whatever you wish, sir."

Mr. Abijah shook his hand cordially.

"Good boy, Jack, good boy. I'll tell you all about what you have to do when you get there. You see it's a delicate matter, and will require a man of intelligence to arrange it properly. These high-caste Japanese are very punctilious and observing. They understand the difference between a common clerk and a man of good breeding very clearly. That is the reason these high *daimios* won't trade with some of the foreign merchants. They dislike our plain manners. They like to take a week of compliments, beating about the bush, before they close a bargain. What I want you to do is to visit your friend, young Kuro-ama, and, if you can, worm yourself into the confidence and friendship of him and his father alike. As a partner of this firm they would receive you. As a clerk, they would disdain you."

"I see, uncle."

"Therefore you will be publicly acknowledged, before you start, as one of our firm, and I shall see it spread far and wide."

"But suppose I fail, uncle?"

"I've thought of that. We'll have a conditional agreement, that, if you succeed, you are to become a partner, with a fifth share, and if you fail you are to remain in your old position. The expense of the journey we assume as a risk. It will be lost if you fail, but a mere flea-bite if you succeed."

"And how am I to travel?"

"By *jin-rick-shaw*, unless you prefer a *nori-mon* litter. You'll dress in our style of course, and we shall have to get you a uniform too."

"What for?"

"To make them think you're a great man. Don't you belong to anything, any military company in the States, hey?"

Jack laughed.

"None, sir. Never had any military learning. We had a fencing and boxing club in the college, and Meeto and I belonged to the Phi Delta Kappa Society, and all that. Then I was initiated as a Mason in San Francisco before I came out."

Uncle Bijah nodded.

"Better than nothing. Find Masons all over the world. Well, we shall have to get you up in court dress, with a sword, I suppose. Must look grand."

"Pardon me," interrupted Jack, "but don't you forget that Meeto has lived in America long enough to understand our ways, and he might suspect I was trying to make a fool of his father, if I were to sail under a false flag."

Uncle Bijah seemed to be struck by this.

"Perhaps you're right, perhaps you're right, boy," he answered. "Yes, you're right. After all it's the friendship you must go on. You can suit yourself about your dress. But the main thing is this. Ingratiate yourself with the old prince, if you can. Don't say a word about business to him; not a word."

"I can promise that safely," answered Jack, with some relief, "but what good will the visit do in that case?"

"Hold on, hold on. Wait till I'm through and you'll see. Don't say a word about business at first. Approach it cautiously. You know the Government used to get all their taxes in rice once, and they compounded it for money about ten years ago. Well, you might lead the conversation that way, and see how he likes the idea of doing the same himself."

"Suppose he does?"

"In that case, tell him that in your opinion the Government did a foolish thing to make the composition at a fixed price. It's true they get a steady income, but suppose rice goes up, it's the tax-payers get the difference, not the Government. Tell him they would have done better to take the rice and manipulate the market to keep up the price. They can sell all they want."

"I see. And what will he say?"

"Probably nothing; but he'll think over it. Any man in the world, even a Japanese prince, will make money if he can. Let him alone and he'll begin to ask you what's the price of rice and how he can sell to the best advantage. Then take it cool. I'll give you all the prices before you go, with the probable limits, to keep in your head. Don't appear eager at first, but tell him a good price, and calculate how much that would be on his crop. Let fall accidentally the fact that our house takes rice from several *daimios*, and even gives advances on crops. If he happens to be short of money, you'll fetch him. I can't tell exactly what will happen. You must use your own discretion. But this I tell you. If he wants an advance on half his crop—that is, on a million *kokas*—we'll give it to him at once, if he'll sign an agreement to sell us all his rice for ten years at the market price in Yokohama."

"I understand, uncle. I'll do my best. When do you want me to start?"

"As soon as you can get ready. Say a week."

"I can go to-morrow."

"Can you?"

The gentleman seemed pleased.

"You've the true Yankee pluck, boy. I'll not say to-morrow, but next day. In the mean time you'll leave the outer office and show yourself on the streets, as if you had nothing to do but take your pleasure. From this moment you're a conditional member of the firm of Fish, Ely & Co."

Jack was going out, feeling a little as if he were in a day-dream of fortune, when his uncle added:

"Ah, by the by, Jack, this evening I'll tell you something it's right you should know about our family. After dinner we'll have a cherooot together."

Jack bowed and left the counting-house, to go to a stable and hire a horse, for he was very fond of riding, and the Yokohama nags are reasonable in price. The natives seldom ride them on account of old customs, which restricted horses to the use of nobles and *samourai*; but since the upheaval of Japan and the influx of foreign customs, the privilege is allowed to all, and as a consequence the *samourai* generally disdain to ride, when all the world shares the custom.

Japanese horses do not amount to much as horses, and considering that they are never shod with iron, but wear straw shoes which only last about a mile or two, it is no wonder they shun the hard high-roads.

Jack Ely's animal was bare-footed, and carried his rider in a saddle of plaited rice-straw with wooden stirrups of the perishable pattern of everything in Japan.

Ely took him down to the hard, sandy beach

of the bay, with no idea of anything more than a good gallop, and insensibly rode out of the foreign settlement till he began to see the rice fields of the country, with the peasants—men and women alike—tending their plantations in the careful Japanese way.

They had no plows or harrows; no horses, no reapers nor mowers. Everything was done by hand, all the crops sown in drills three feet apart, and one might see planting, hoeing and reaping going on at the same time all over the country, thanks to the perpetually mild climate of the southern islands of the empire, which permits constant rotation of crops.

To Jack everything was novel, and he was interested in the simple life of the people, till he began to notice that he was coming to a fishing-village, where he might observe another phase of native life.

Before him were the cottages, with their quaint, curved roofs of red tiles, their bamboo walls and paper partitions, while before every door stood a huge tub of water about four feet high, in which the whole family was wont to bathe in public after work for the day in the innocent, old-fashioned Japanese way, that he had not seen in Yokohama.

Down by the beach were several boats, of a pattern so strongly resembling the Connecticut "sharpie" that Ely could have sworn he was back on Long Island Sound again, had he not seen the dresses of the sailors and the gay colors of the sails.

Out on the beautiful bay, which divides Yokohama from Yeddo or Tokio, these craft were sailing to and fro in all directions.

Some were evidently fishing-boats, others as clearly pleasure craft, with striped awnings, and family parties going out for a day's sail and picnic.

Every now and then the tall white sails of a foreign clipper entering or departing could be seen among these smaller craft, while the smoke of more than one steamer showed the state of trade, and out in the middle of the bay lay five men-of-war at anchor, three of which wore the Japanese flag over long, swift-modeled steam gunboats.

Jack Ely gazed out on the view and held his horse, for it fascinated him greatly with its mingling of East and West, civilization and barbarism, old times and new on land and sea.

Close beside the Japanese steamers, with their modern improvements, lay a fleet of eleven junks, with lofty forecastles and poops, long brass guns grinning out of open ports, relics of the past, as he thought. Yet these same antiquated but picturesque vessels wore the Japanese official flag, and were just as much a part of the navy as the new gunboats, while to the mind of the average Japanese, they were just as formidable, if not more so.

This he found when he spoke to a tall and dignified Japanese gentleman whom he met on the beach, for a wonder, on a horse.

"Why is it," asked Jack in Japanese, "that your Government retains those old junks in service, most illustrious sir?"

The old gentleman—his hair was white—did not exhibit any surprise at the language of his interlocutor, but answered with a courteous inclination and smile:

"Because we are accustomed to fight in them, most noble sir. There are many of us who think that the anger of the gods is kindled by our following foreign ways, and who sigh for the revival of the ancient customs. Look at the strength of those war-vessels and the number of their guns. See, there are at least fifty guns in each vessel, while on the foreign steamers not five each. Some have but one. Why should we change fifty guns for one?"

He bowed and waved his hand with an air which plainly said:

"That will do, young man. No liberties with me if you please. I've put you down."

And Jack was so impressed with the quiet, overbearing dignity of the man that he never retorted a word, but let the Japanese ride on.

CHAPTER VIII.

WESTERN SCIENCE VS. EASTERN MUSCLE

JACK ELY could not help looking after the old Japanese with some curiosity. It was the first time he had seen a high-caste noble alone, though they occasionally passed through the streets of Yokohama attended by their armed retinues of *samurai*.

Then they had always been shrouded from view in *norimons*, as they had come from the back country on their way to cross the bridge of boats at the upper end of the bay to Tokio.

But this gentleman, from his calmly haughty but extremely courteous air, was of the highest caste, and yet rode quite alone.

He had answered Jack with perfect courtesy, and yet he had signified to him so plainly that the foreigner's question was a liberty, that Jack was quite taken aback.

"Who can he be?" he thought, as he watched the retiring figure.

A tall and portly personage, in gay silk robes, with the bare head universal in Japan, his long, white hair arranged in a thick club on the top of his head, with long, gold pins and a white silk handkerchief as its only protection

from the sun, while his two swords were of unusual length, with handles that sparkled with gems.

Yet he rode a commonplace nag, and was all alone, his bare feet resting in coarse, wooden stirrups.

Jack watched him as he passed some fishermen taking in their nets, and saw the men look up carelessly, then start as if they recognized some great personage, and immediately prostrate themselves in the dust with profound respect.

"Some great *daimio*," he said to himself as he watched the old noble out of sight, and then he turned his attention to the bay once more, to see a huge mat-sail passing swiftly out of the harbor near the men-of-war, and recognize the same *lorcha* he had first seen from the deck of the Golden Gate.

She was coming swiftly down the bay, almost as fast as a steamer, for the wind was blowing fresh, and her sail of enormous size compared to the pair of tiny racing hulls beneath it.

The direction of the wind compelled her to alter her course several times to clear the harbor mouth, and she came up so close to the shore on which he was, that he could distinguish faces among her crew, as she tacked within a hundred yards of the shore.

There stood Old Double Sword, in his gay robes, close to where a long oar or sweep protruded from the deck, to be used in steering, while all of the wild crew were gathered in a dense group to windward, to balance the machine.

Every now and then the force of the wind would almost raise them from the water, and they would lean out over the weather rail to increase the leverage, the sharp hull cutting the water like a knife.

When the *lorcha* tacked, instead of sweeping round like a Christian boat, she was driven up into the wind, then allowed to fall off till her way stopped; when the steering-oar was lifted out of the water; another dropped in at the other end, the sail shifted from end to end of the concern, and the whole thing went off, apparently stern foremost, sailing equally well either way.

Twice she tacked in this funny way, the weather boat always keeping to windward, and the third time Jack galloped along the beach so close to her that he excited the attention of the men on board for the first time.

As the *lorcha* tacked close to him, one of the men in the crew called out in the native tongue:

"What do you look at, hog of a Christian? Curses on your mother's grave!"

Jack, nettled at the insult, shouted back:

"You are an uncivil dog, and deserve a thrashing for it. Come on shore, and I'll give you one."

He never reflected what he was saying, but his words caused a shout of laughter in the *lorcha*, and Old Double Sword turned and inspected him closely, calling out:

"Well answered, stranger. Matabei has no manners, and a thrashing would do him good. But you are unarmed."

This was during the pause, while the fleet vessel was losing her way, and she had been nearly motionless for as much as twenty seconds.

Jack called back at once.

"I want no weapons for such as him. Send him ashore, and I will do as I said."

Old Double Sword laughed aloud and his men seemed to be equally delighted, for they began to jeer at Matabei, who, on his part, shook his fist at Jack, and roared:

"I am Matabei, the wrestler, and I can eat you at one mouthful."

Jack made no answer, for he began to be ashamed of bandying words with a ruffian of this stamp, but he was surprised to hear Old Double Sword shout out:

"Down with the sail, and we'll see that Matabei fulfills his boast. Down the sail!"

The men seemed to be in excellent discipline, for the sail fell as if by magic at the moment the *lorcha* was gathering way on the other tack, and the chief roared:

"Down with the anchors! You, Matabei, strip and swim ashore. No weapons. If you strangle the Christian, alone, I will make you a chief. Go!"

And the next moment Jack saw Matabei, a brawny Japanese, tearing off his clothes—a very short operation for him—and plunging into the water to swim ashore.

He remembered what Jackson had said about the Japanese despising cowardice, and saw that he must fight and fight his best too.

True, he might have galloped away; but, as if to warn him that might not be any safer than fighting, Double Sword roared:

"Stay where you are, oh sau, and fight, or my men will shoot at you. Words and blows go together in our country."

Jack immediately threw himself from his horse, calling back:

"I'm ready to fight, if you'll promise me fair play."

"Fair play on the honor of a samurai," was the earnest answer. "No man ever called Old Double Sword a traitor."

There was something in the tone of the man's

voice that reassured Jack, and he tied his horse to a tree, threw off his upper garments in haste, and walked down to the shore to wait for Matabei, who was swimming steadily in.

The Japanese landed, and Jack saw that he was a large and muscular man, but overloaded with fat, like all Japanese wrestlers.

Matabei waited for a few moments to recover his breath, showing no fear that Jack would take an unfair advantage of him, and then made a wild bull-rush at him with his head down.

Jack had often heard Meeto describe the Japanese methods of wrestling, and he was prepared for the meeting.

Matabei shut his eyes just before he struck with his head, and the Yankee brought up his knee with all his strength, and sent his foe flying, with the whole of his front teeth stove in and his nose broken.

Matabei roared like a bull, staggered and threw up his arms, when Jack sailed in with all the strength and science he had at his command, and battered his foe, almost unresisting, on face and body, Matabei evidently ignorant of the first principles of fist-fighting, leaving himself open, his arms going like flails, unable to hit Jack, and getting frightfully punished all the time, till his eyes were so swelled up he could not see his foe, and Jack finished him with two terrible blows in the pit of the stomach, under which Matabei sunk on the sand gasping and powerless.

Then Jack looked up and saw that the wild crew of the pirate *lorcha* were staring at him, open-mouthed and silent.

He retired from the discomfited Matabei at once, crying out:

"Pick up your champion, noble friends, and let him learn manners in future."

His bold language seemed to please them, for he heard a low laugh, and Old Double Sword called to his men:

"The stranger is a noble gentleman, and he has done well to Matabei. None shall hurt him. Go ashore with the *sampan* and bring him back!"

Jack walked to his horse and resumed his clothes, feeling not a little proud of his exploit, for he had not received a mark in his contest with the Herculean Japanese, thanks to good luck and the mistake that Matabei had made at the beginning of the contest by letting himself be knocked stupid.

When he had dressed, he mounted, and was about to ride away, when he saw two men come ashore in a little *sampan* and take up Matabei, who was groaning dismally, for he was quite blind from the swelling in his cheeks which covered up his eyes, and it frightened him greatly.

Jack rode down to the shore and said to the men, who saluted him politely:

"When you get him on board, cut him on those swellings, and let a little blood out, so that the man can see."

One of the men prostrated himself to say:

"It is plainly seen you are a great prince in your own country; for you kill first and then cure a man. We will follow your honorable advice."

"Where are you going now?" asked Jack, carelessly, as he turned away.

"To slay the enemies of our lord," was the reply.

"And who is your lord?"

The Japanese smiled and answered:

"Your lordship is a great prince and knows of the custom of *dayboon*. Our lord walks in the night, and his name is hidden."

Jack bowed and replied:

"Give the compliments of the foreigner, Jack Ely, to him, and say I hope for better news of him some day."

The man bowed low.

"I will surely deliver your honorable and princely message to my lord. The great Prince *Jakeli*. I will not forget the name."

Jack smiled at the pronunciation.

"Not *Jakeli*. Jack is my first name, Ely my last, like your Meeto Kurosama, who is my friend."

He noticed the Japanese started slightly at the last name, but the man said nothing in reply except:

"I will remember, great sir. Jako Elio. I will deliver the message."

Then Jack turned his horse and raised his hat to the *lorcha*, calling out in English:

"Farewell, Lord of the Double Sword. I owe you two debts now, for your politeness. My name is Jack Ely. Happy to see you, if ever you come to Fish, Ely & Co."

He said this, remembering what Jackson had told him of Double Sword being a foreigner, but the strange captain of the *lorcha* called back in Japanese:

"Be pleased to repeat your honorable speech in our own tongue, for we speak no other, and do not understand you."

Jack bit his lip but complied, and Double Sword answered suavely:

"My lord is very polite. Possibly we may meet again, and should my lord ever be in trouble on the seas of our empire, the Double Sword will do his best to come to his help."

Then, he salaamed low, and Jack rode away back to Yokohama, thinking to himself that he was having no lack of curious adventures in Japan.

When he reached his uncle's house, it was getting into the heat of the day, when every one took a siesta, and he felt sufficiently weary, after his ride and boxing-match, to follow their example.

He woke at sunset, and was called to dinner with his uncle, after which Mr. Abijah said to him seriously:

"Jack, my boy, now you're one of the firm it's only right you should know the secrets, as far as they concern you. I told you I had something to say to you."

"Yes, uncle, I'm all attention."

He did not think it would be anything of very much importance and answered rather in a careless tone, which uncle 'Bijah noticed, for he retorted a little sharply:

"Of course if you'd rather not hear it, I won't trespass on your attention."

Jack started into an attitude of respect.

"On the contrary, sir, I am very anxious to hear it. Is it a firm matter, or does it only concern our family?"

"Both," replied uncle 'Bijah slowly. "It concerns one of the founders of the firm and myself. I—I suppose you know our family history?"

"Not fully, sir. My father has always been rather reticent on the point. I know that he had two brothers, one of whom died before I was born; the other, yourself."

Uncle 'Bijah nodded.

"Ay, ay; all but one thing. I am sometimes tempted to wish that poor Stephen had died, before you were born, but it is not true. I have reason to believe he is still alive, and hiding under an assumed name."

Jack began to get excited.

"For what, sir? No trouble, I hope—"

Abijah Ely put up his hand.

"Let me speak. Don't interrupt. No, no; not what you mean. He did not forge any one's name or steal or murder. That's not it. He only threw himself away, wrecked his whole life, and found out his mistake when it was too late. But I am puzzling you. I must begin at the beginning."

He settled himself in his chair and the lines of his face, generally so jolly and comfortable, changed to a gray sternness that amazed Jack, who had never seen his uncle look thus, as he continued slowly:

"Yes; there were three of us. Jack, Abijah and Stephen; or I ought to put Steve first. He was the oldest. Your father was the youngest. He, as you know, studied law; I went into the Japanese trade, and Steve went to sea. We had done that for five generations, one to sea, the other to trade, the third, if there was a third, to the law. Well, Steve went to sea as a boy, and, as he grew up, took a fancy to enter the navy. I don't know how it was either, for never an Ely had been out of the merchant or whaling fleets before, but he got an appointment as mate, and he was an acting master when our civil war broke out. Jack, my boy, you're too young to remember those days, and how families were divided by it; but I shall never forget them, though I was here at the time and not exposed to the full heat of war. Well, boy, your uncle Steve took the wrong side, like a good many others. He had a Southern captain, and nine-tenths of the officers in his ship were of the same stripe. They all resigned when the vessel got home, and Steve, my own brother, a few months later, joined the terrible Alabama and raised his hand against his fellow-countrymen."

The old man seemed to be much affected by the recital, though to Jack it was not so fearful as it appeared to be to his uncle, who had gone through the heat of the contest twenty years before. He went on after a pause.

"We heard of it, I in Yokohama, John in New Haven; but we didn't see Steve—at least he never did, I guess. We agreed to consider him as dead; to let no one know we had a brother who had disgraced the family. That's how you came to think he was dead. Your father told you. But he wasn't, Jack. I—I saw him."

Uncle 'Bijah stopped again and blew his nose violently, taking a sly wipe at his eyes to conceal the fact that tears were in them, as if he were ashamed of it.

He even puffed ostentatiously at his cheroot which had almost gone out: threw it angrily away, declaring it tasted stale, and lighted another, to give himself time to overcome the emotion he felt, for which Jack could assign no cause as yet.

At last he continued:

"Yes, Jack, I saw him at last. You know that ship the Alabama destroyed our commerce almost entirely, captured, burned, sunk, and did as she pleased to our peaceable ships, defying the pursuit of what vessels of war we had for a long time. When the Atlantic became too hot to hold her she sailed for the Pacific and made her best hauls right here in the Chinese and Japanese trade. You don't remember it of course, but I do, how the sympathy of most for-

eign nations was against us in that war and the Alabama was welcomed in every neutral port. She staid here, frequently anchoring right opposite our settlement and flaunting her flag in our faces on purpose to insult us, while her officers and men frequently came ashore and we were compelled to meet them. It was then that I saw my brother Stephen for the first time in five years, in the gray uniform we had learned to detest, and it was then I endured the great sorrow of my life."

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE 'BIJAH'S STORY.

UNCLE 'BIJAH leaned his head on his hand as he said this, and fell into a fit of musing which Jack did not disturb, till the old man went on thoughtfully:

"I suppose I was a fool, Jack, to think that one so plain and unattractive as myself could ever win the heart of a beautiful woman. I never was good-looking, even as a young man. I was short, thin, weakened in appearance and became bald early. It was not until I reached forty that I began to grow stout. I was, I frankly confess it, plain, very plain, and awkward. And yet, Jack, do you know, she told me she really loved me."

Jack asked no questions, though he was puzzled. His uncle's little romance was coming out and he thought it best to let the old man talk on.

Uncle 'Bijah seemed to be saddened by his memories, for he repeated softly:

"Yes, yes, she said she loved me; and I was fool enough to believe her, Jack. But then I never had much experience of women, and Flora Burgess owed a great deal to me. At this distance of time I can hardly say that I was a greater fool than other men."

"How did you first meet her?" asked Jack in a low tone, to help his uncle, who had paused.

"Meet her? Oh, yes, I forgot. You don't know any of the details of the story. She was the daughter of one of our most esteemed correspondents in San Francisco, a man of great riches before the war, but all his money was embarked in our trade, and in less than three months that terrible Alabama had reduced him to beggary. And at that very time his daughter was here, on a visit to Mrs. Fish, wife of our senior partner. He used to reside here then. Our house had only been started a few years before and I was admitted as a partner at a time when the risk was tremendous. Possibly I might never have been let in at another time, but it was known that my brother was an officer of the Alabama, and thought that his influence might save our ships."

"And did it?"

"I don't know. I only know we had most exceptional luck in running cargoes, and it was the profits of those two years that placed me where I am financially. Ah, Jack, that was all very well, but what I gained in money I lost in everything else. But you shall hear all now."

He seemed to be considering how to shorten his story, and went on more briskly:

"Flora Burgess was here, as I told you, when the news came of her father's ruin, and it was my good fortune to be able to be kind to her when she needed friends. Poor Burgess could not even send the money to pay her passage home, and the Fishes, who were cold, selfish people, were disposed to treat her with unkindness in her altered state, when I interposed by offering her my hand and fortune, which she, poor girl, in her loneliness, accepted, as I now think, as a refuge from poverty; as I then thought from genuine affection. At all events we were formally engaged, and Mrs. Fish treated her thereafter with courtesy as my future wife. It was then that the Alabama came into port, her officers became the lions of the foreign settlement, and I saw my brother Stephen."

"Was your meeting unpleasant?"

"I can hardly say so. I had always been brought up to respect and admire Stephen. He was eight years older than I, a tall, handsome fellow, a great athlete, very different from poor me. I could not find it in my heart to treat him as an absolute foe, though I spoke plainly to him on what I thought of his conduct, but in those days we were all down in the scale, our armies defeated, our credit waning, all the world calling out that the Union was destroyed. Stephen and his friends were exultant and good-naturedly contemptuous of the few Union men we had here. Even Mr. Fish, our senior partner, was a Southern sympathizer, having come from Baltimore, though he did not let his sympathy interfere with his pocket. It was at his house that I met Stephen for the first time, and the first person I saw as I entered, was my betrothed, Flora Burgess, talking to my brother, and looking at his handsome face and figure in a way that sent a cold chill through my heart. Jack, for the first time in my life I felt jealous, and of my own brother."

"And what came of it all?" asked Jack, in a low, sympathizing tone. "Surely he was not so base as to supplant you?"

Uncle 'Bijah shook his head.

"No, not quite so bad as that—not quite

so bad, Jack. I don't think he meant to do it at first, but Flora was very beautiful, very beautiful, and—and—I own it—she led him on. Yes, I own that. She led him on. She was fond of flirting. He was the best looking man in Yokohama, and a hero in most people's eyes. It did not take long. She never cared for me. I might have known that. I was not even a rich man in those days, though I was prospering. I can't say she acted dishonorably with me. She told me finally she had made a mistake, and asked to be released from her engagement. What could I do? I gave her up—"

"And she married Stephen?" asked Jack.

Uncle 'Bijah sighed.

"No. If that had been all, I could have borne it, for I saw she loved him. But he did not love her, Jack; not enough, at all events, to ask her to be his wife. He was a wild fellow, fond of adventure, a bitter rebel in opinion, and, like most sailors, a general lover. He went away in the Alabama, and Flora disappeared from Mr. Fish's house."

"Disappeared!" echoed Jack. "Ran away with him, do you mean?"

"No, no, no, not so bad as that," answered the old man, hurriedly. "Not so bad as that, Jack. I will say that for them, if they were pirates they had no women on board to degrade their names still further. No, Flora left the house the day after the Alabama sailed, and we never found where she had gone till two years afterward."

"And where was that?"

Abijah Ely's head sunk into his hands as he answered, brokenly:

"Jack, my boy, I would have forgiven her if she had only given me a chance. I would have made her a good husband and never asked for love, till it came. I was so plain, I know that. I knew it then. I had no right to expect a beauty like her to marry me, no matter how poor she was. But she never gave me a chance. Stephen had paid her in her own coin. She had jilted me and he jilted her. It seems that she had fully expected him to speak before he went away, but he only left a letter of farewell and it stung and mortified her so dreadfully that she could not face the world any more in her dependent position."

"But where did she go?" asked Jack, curiously.

"I'll tell you. I'm coming to that presently. You don't remember the outbreak of 1863 I suppose?"

"You mean here, sir?"

"No, not in Yokohama, but in the island of Kinsies, and especially in Satsuma's province. They broke out and murdered all the foreigners; and a British fleet bombarded Kagosima, and burned the town in revenge. We were safe enough here, but the poor missionaries were slaughtered like sheep. Only one that I knew escaped alive, and in him I found the husband of my poor lost Flora. His name was Hastings."

Jack uttered an exclamation of wonder.

"Hastings! Why I know—"

"Know whom, Jack? Not him?"

"No, but his daughter. She came over in the Golden Gate with me and her aunt, Miss Hoyt, and they were going to find Hastings at some place in the interior. But surely that can't be the same. You said the lady's name was Burgess, and she married a man called Hastings. How could her sister be Miss Hoyt. I don't understand."

Uncle 'Bijah listened quietly.

"It's the same, Jack," he said. "Hastings had a step-sister, Miss Hoyt, a heroic woman, who stood by his side unflinchingly in all the perils of a missionary's life. I heard a rumor that she had carried away a baby in an open boat from the scenes of massacre, while Hastings was hiding in the palace of one of Prince Kurosama's principal feudatories, but I did not believe it. All that I thought of was this. I found, after the disturbances were over, that Flora Burgess had married this Hastings, who turned out to be a distant relative of hers; that she had fled to him in the midst of the jealous, half-savage Satsuma men; that she had married him, all in a hurry, to protect her reputation and conceal the fact that my brother had jilted her; and finally that she had died in the midst of the troubles."

"And how did you find it out?" asked Jack.

Uncle 'Bijah sighed.

"After the war was over; after our name had become famous; after the world's verdict had been reversed; when our house had recovered its credit, and become what you see it now, I was visited by this Hastings. I did not know him. Never heard of him except by reputation, from being the sole survivor of the massacre. I had no idea of the way in which his life and mine had become connected, till we had conversed quite a while. Then he told me abruptly that he had a letter for me. 'From a person who is now dead,' he told me, and asked me to read it at my leisure, and excuse him from further call, as the memory was a very painful one to him. Of course I could only bow, not asking any questions, and he went away. After he had gone I read the letter. It was from Flora."

The old man stopped and seemed unable to go on for a little while.

Jack remained silent, for he respected the grief which had such power after twenty years over a hard-headed, practical man of business like Abijah Ely.

The sun had gone down, and the street lamps outside were lighted, throwing a glare into the broad veranda on which they were sitting together.

Uncle 'Bijah had long ago given up the pretense of smoking, and sat with his head bent forward, looking older than Jack had yet seen him, his hands folded, while he gazed thoughtfully at the floor.

To help him, Jack lighted another cheroot, got up and took a turn down the long veranda, and then came back and sat down, saying quietly:

"What was in the letter, sir, if you don't object to my asking?"

Abijah Ely started slightly, as if roused from a reverie.

"No, no, I'm going to tell you. Give me a little time, Jack."

Then after another long pause, he said slowly and thoughtfully:

"I was in the prime of life then, Jack, and just beginning to be respected by all spite of my plain looks. I was thirty-eight when I first saw Flora. I was forty when that letter came to me. Now I'm a man of near sixty, and yet I can hardly speak calmly of that day. You shall see the letter some time. Not now, not now. It's locked up and it's a hard struggle for me to unlock the place and look at it again. But I can tell you the contents, almost word for word. She had written it, she said, when she expected to die—probably in the midst of the troubles, poor girl. I don't know what other cause there could have been; and she was going to beg her husband to deliver it to me after her death. She said that he knew her whole miserable story, how she had thrown away a good man's love to be thrown away like a soiled glove by the only man she ever truly loved, and that it had served her right. She begged my pardon for all the grief she had caused me—begged it in the most humble manner, asked me to forgive, and try to think kindly of her after she was gone. As if I could do any less for her, poor girl!"

"Ah, Jack! women don't know how men love, if they do love! And then, at the end of all came the prayer that I should try to forgive my brother Stephen. She assured me that in all the matter he had been blameless, and that she had led him on. That she had loved him dearly, and could not help loving him still—that her husband knew it, but that he was a good man and forgave her that. It closed with what seemed to me then a singular prophecy. Remember, that letter was written when every one thought the Confederacy would triumph. Yet Flora wrote that she knew that, within two years, Stephen would be a hunted fugitive, an exile from his native land, driven to hide his name and cause in oblivion. She begged me, when the time came that I found him in distress, to comfort and forgive him, and tell him that she died loving him."

When the old man had finished, he stooped down to pick up the cheroot that had fallen from his fingers in his earnest narration, heaved a deep sigh, and then seemed to throw off his dejection by an effort, to say with affected gruffness:

"There, that's all. What do you think of that for a story?"

Jack hesitated.

"Is that all?"

"Yes. All but this. I've never seen Stephen since, and I know, after the capture of the Alabama, he was a hunted fugitive for more than three years, till the amnesty. Where he is now, no one knows. He may be dead, but I hardly think it."

"Why not?"

"Because he would have sent us some sort of message—I'm confident of that. But what do you think of the letter, Jack?"

Jack puffed out a volume of smoke.

"I think—I'm glad I'm not married. And I'm more sorry for Hastings than any of you."

Uncle 'Bijah, seemed disturbed.

"Why, boy—why, why! Confound it, he was only a missionary!"

Jack stared.

"Only a missionary! Why, sir, I thought that every one respected them."

Abijah Ely shrugged his shoulders.

"At home they do. Out here we don't, so much. If it hadn't been for those meddling missionaries, there never would have been any trouble in Japan. When it was the Jesuits in the old times, they must needs insult the Buddhists, and all the rest, tell them to burn their idols and pull down their temples, and all that sort of thing. Now, it's the same with the Protestants."

"They're not satisfied with teaching a pure religion, and letting the natives take it or leave it, according as they see it's true; but they must needs begin by telling them just the same as the Jesuits did. They make trouble wherever they

go, and if ever there is another massacre, it will simply be because the missionaries won't stop throwing mud at other men's religion. And this man Hastings is a regular bigoted Methodist, who wants to ram his religion down every one's throat, whether they will or no."

Uncle 'Bijah spoke warmly, for he was a born trader, immersed in business, and had a holy horror of anything likely to interfere with business, religion included.

Jack ventured to reply:

"But the man can't help it. He thinks it is his duty to preach the truth to these ignorant and degraded heathens."

Uncle 'Bijah grew still more irritated.

"Confound him, that's just what he says. And the Buddhist *bouzes* are just as sure of their being correct; so they fight like cat and dog whenever they come together. They think it's their duty to tell him he's a liar, and so it goes. The Government is liberal enough. They know the advantages of our education and encourage our people to settle here and teach the natives, but they make a special exception. They won't allow any one in Government employ to teach the Christian religion,* and by Jove, I think they're right."

And there was no getting uncle 'Bijah to alter his mind, or to see that in all the Flora Burgess affair, Hastings, the poor missionary, was the person to be pitied.

CHAPTER X.

PRINCE KUROKAWA.

To Jack Ely, on the other hand, unbiased by any feelings of his own, unless his open admiration of Flora Hastings might have its influence, the whole story of uncle 'Bijah ended more sadly for Flora's father than any one else.

He could not help feeling a decided sympathy for the lovely missionary, leading a life of such constant peril for more than twenty years, derided and abused even by his own people, with the only glimpse of happiness in his married life torn from him by the rude discovery that his wife devotedly loved another man who despised her, and that she thought more of the Ely family on her death-bed than of her own husband, whom she had married out of spite or vanity, to save herself from the shame of being a jilted flirt.

To Jack her whole story showed her as a vain, heartless, self-indulgent woman, quite unworthy of the love she had evidently inspired in one man at least, and he thought:

"It's to be hoped Flora Hastings does not take after her mother. If she does, the less I have to do with her the better."

Yet Jack had been decidedly disposed to like Flora, and needed but little provocation to make him fall really in love with her, given the time and propinquity necessary for a love affair.

He thought a good deal about her that night, and wondered whether he should come across her on his contemplated visit to his friend, Meeto Kurosama; but finally fell asleep to dream of her, and woke before sunrise to remember that the time of his journey approached.

His uncle called him into the inner office that morning, to say:

"By the by, Jack, you'll have to wait a day or two."

"For what, sir?"

"Before you go to Kiusiu. Old Kurosama has come in, and he had an interview with the mikado yesterday."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes. I heard it to-day. It seems the old man sent his retinue on by boat, and took a solitary ride, yesterday afternoon, through the streets of Yokohama, crossing the ferry to Tokio alone."

"I wonder whether it was he I saw," said Jack, musingly. "What sort of a looking man is he?"

"I've got his portrait somewhere here," his uncle replied, rummaging among his papers. "Yes, here it is with the rest of the big *daimios* at the reception of our last embassy. That is he next to the mikado."

He showed Jack a photograph of a court reception, and in the figure of the great Lord of Kurosama young Ely recognized, without much surprise, the dignified personage he had seen the day before.

"That's the man," he said; "but what was he doing here all alone?"

Abijah Ely shrugged his shoulders.

"One of their points of honor. The town's all agog with it. It seems he has a great enemy in old Satsuma, who came to court a week ago, and the Satsuma men have been strutting about the streets for all they're worth. And some

*A fact. The exclusiveness of the Japanese toward foreigners arose first from the quarrels in the sixteenth century between the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Buddhist priests. They found the Christians of that day to be turbulent and persecuting, as a sect, and they have never since recovered from their distrust of Christianity, though it is tolerated to the extent of permitting a church to be raised in Yokohama for the use of the foreign settlement. Missionaries are still very scarce in Japan, and only barely tolerated by a few *daimios*, though Christianity is slowly spreading among the higher caste Japanese, where they are not rationalists.

man of his rank made him a bet that he would be cut to pieces unless he came with a large escort. So the old prince, to show his daring, sent his escort on ahead and rode through here alone in broad daylight, and none of them raised a hand against him."

"But his own men are all over the town of Tokio," said Jack, remembering his adventure in the "Garden of Heaven."

"Very likely, very likely. He has the name of being a keen old soldier in his way," said uncle 'Bijah; "but all the same, it was a very daring thing to do. Why, in the troubles of '68, over twenty great nobles, going to visit the mikado, were cut to pieces before the gate of the palace by a band of *ronins*, who were known to be Satsuma men."*

"And were they not punished?"

"They were arrested. At least, three were taken alive, after a desperate resistance, and they were questioned as to who instigated the outrage; but all three committed happy dispatch before the judges, and no further inquiry was made. I tell you, Jack, it's a queer country as soon as you get outside of the foreign settlement."

"Then it's no use my going to Kiosima till he gets back," observed Jack, thoughtfully. "I wonder if Meeto's there?"

"His son, you mean? No. I heard that the reason his father came here was to present the boy at court in proper style."

"Then I don't see why I shouldn't go to Tokio and see if I can't meet him," said Jack. "I'm sure Meeto will be glad to see me. He's often told me how he would like to introduce me to his father and tell him of our first fight with the *sophs* at Yale."

Uncle 'Bijah rubbed his hands.

"The very thing. The very thing, if you can manage it."

"I can but try," said Jack.

With that he dressed himself in the same Japanese costume Meeto had given him, the proper apparel of a young nobleman, and set off to cross the ferry to Tokio, exciting more notice among the boatmen than if he had worn his proper habiliments.

To keep up the excitement, and more as a joke than anything else, he took Takewaka along with him and talked nothing but English till he got to Tokio, when he inquired the way to the mikado's palace, and was at once set down as a lunatic by his follower.

Takewaka even ventured to remonstrate.

"But it is not permitted, great sir. No one can go near it without an introduction from the ambassador, and it is a great day to-day. The mikado holds a reception for the great lords."

"So much the better, Takewaka. You shall go forward and announce that I am a great lord, too. Go ahead."

He threatened the coolie with his cane, and the luckless Takewaka, who was mortally afraid of his young master since the street fight, skipped out of the way, crying:

"Certainly, oh sau. I will lead your honorable worship there, but we shall all be cut to bits. You'll see, you'll see."

But Jack had no intention of making a fool of himself by going to the mikado's palace, where the guards might take a fancy to hack him to pieces. He only wanted to frighten Takewaka and see where that notorious liar would take him.

He kept his eyes open and saw that the streets were full of people, while the richly lacquered *norimons* of the different dignitaries came trooping along, each in the midst of a retinue of armed *samourais*, who looked askance at each other and swaggered to and fro, with a rakish and devil-may-care aspect that reminded him of the opening quarrel scene in "Romeo and Juliet."

The retainers were evidently spoiling for a fight, while their lords lay back in their litters with a quiet, lazy dignity that permitted nothing to disturb it, and never noticed each other any more than to bow coldly to those of equal rank.

The lesser lords, or *saimios* he recognized from their being on foot, and they were always particular to salute with great respect the men in the litters, who barely acknowledged the deep reverence by a movement of the head.

Very soon, however, Jack found that he himself, from his light hair and mustache, had become an object of interest to more than one group of *samourais*, while Takewaka had become so frightened at the fierce glances that he met that he slunk close at his master's heels and faltered brokenly:

"Oh sau, great sau, don't go any further. It is too dangerous. They kill white people. It is impossible to stop them if they once begin. Let us go home."

Jack turned on him angrily.

"You confounded coward, hold your tongue. We have swords too if they attack us."

Takewaka shivered.

"That's just it, great sau. The *samourais* don't like us common fellows to wear swords, and they may kill me for spite. Please let us go home."

*A fact.

Jack was about to answer him, when a big strapping *samurai*, with two swords in his sash, came up to Takewaka and called out to his friend in a ferocious jest:

"See here, gentlemen. I bought a new sword only last week, and I've not tried it. I will bet any gentleman two *yen*" (dollars of our money nearly) "that I cut this fellow in half at one blow."

"No, no," called out another, coming up. "That's no test of a sword. Let's slice off his nose and make him eat it."

"For my part," interposed a third, "I think that he has too long ears. Let's cut them off and have them fried for supper."

Takewaka had turned livid as he heard the threats, and he dropped on his knees to stammer out brokenly:

"Gentlemen, great lords, noble princes, I am but a common fellow, a servant of this barbarian here. He makes me wear a sword. I am a dog, unworthy to carry your clogs for you, but he is worse than I. Kill him if you must kill any one; not your own countryman."

They began to laugh, and Jack, willing to see how far they would carry their rude joke, said to Takewaka in English:

"What's the matter? What do these men want?"

Takewaka turned to him quivering:

"They wish to kill your lordship, and I have told them to kill me first. Let us run, oh sau. They are getting angry."

Jack burst out laughing at the *samurai*, and called out in English:

"Go back to your lords, you fools. Don't you know that if you touch a hair of my head the Government will kill you all? Get back, I say."

His manner was commanding and so fierce and fearless that it daunted the ruffing *samurai*.

They were only trying to bully and he saw that, though he did not know that there was a vast difference between an affair with a common coolie, of whom the law took but little notice, and one with a foreigner whose death might bring down a visit from men-of-war and a demand for indemnity.

He perceived also that more than one in the crowd understood English, for a voice from one of the *norimon*s called out in stern tones:

"What is all this? Do you want to be sent to do happy dispatch at once?"

Jack looked up and saw Prince Kurosama in a gorgeous litter, and the old man favored him with a slight smile, as he returned Jack's bow courteously.

As for the *samurai*, they slunk back to their lord's litter without another word, and Jack went boldly up, to Takewaka's intense awe, and held out his hand, saying in Japanese:

"Great Prince of Kurosama, it rejoices me greatly to see the father of my friend Meeto. If your nobility will permit me to salute you in our American fashion I shall feel very much honored. I am Jack Ely."

The old prince held out his hand in a cold way, as if he allowed for barbarian customs, and answered courteously:

"I have heard much of you from my son. He tells me you are a brave man and saved him from indignity. You are welcome. You have our speech very excellent, sir."

Jack bowed and drew back, while the *samurai* around stared at him with open mouths, astounded at what they heard.

"I will not detain your highness from the honorable journey you are making," he said; "but I could not refrain from paying my respects to the father of my friend."

The old prince bowed again more kindly.

"My son gives me good reports of you," he said, "and you are almost worthy to be one of us. I shall hope to have the pleasure of entertaining you on my return to my province. You will see my son in the next *norimon*."

He waved his hand with the slight, haughty gesture of one dismissing an inferior, and sunk back; while each *samurai* in passing Jack, as the litter moved on, favored him with a profound reverence.

As for Takewaka, he had sunk down on his heels with a vacant stare and grin, too much amazed and frightened to say a word till the litter had gone on, when he softly sighed to himself:

"He talks our tongue and is the friend of the great Kurosama! Now, Takewaka, your time has come for happy dispatch."

So saying, he actually drew out the knife at his girdle, and was about to rip himself up, when Jack sent the knife flying with a kick, and said good-humoredly:

"No need, Takewaka. I know you're a coward and a liar, but you're a funny one, and I'll keep you yet awhile. Stay close to me."

"Your honorable majesty may be sure I will," answered Takewaka, with such earnestness that Jack burst out laughing as the long procession moved on, till a familiar voice accosted him in English:

"Ah! my respected friend, Jack Ely, and why are you so merry, and what do you here to-day?"

Jack looked up and saw Meeto, transmogrified into a high-caste *daimio* once more, in a gorgeous *norimon*, smiling at him.

Meeto had had his forehead shaved in the Japanese style to the middle of his head, and he wore his black hair clubbed with long gold pins glittering with gems.

His robe was of stiff, gold-brocaded silk, and his sword-hilts blazed with diamonds; so that altogether he was a different figure from the quiet student of Yale.

"I came to see you, hearing you were here," said Jack, "and to ask you when you are going home. The fact is, I am impatient to see more of your manners and customs, and I am coming to visit you, if you really meant your invitation to me."

Meeto smiled like one well pleased.

"Of course I meant it. My father is anxious to see you."

"I've just introduced myself to him," said Jack carelessly.

Meeto started and seemed anxious.

"You did? And how did he receive you?"

"Quite politely. In fact, he rather saved my man Takewaka from a beating at the hands of your *samurai*."

Meeto seemed greatly relieved.

"I am so glad to hear it. He is full of the old customs, you know, and you did a daring thing to speak to him first."

"Why?"

"Because it is against our customs for a great prince to be addressed first by any one not of superior or equal rank. And you say he received you kindly?"

"Certainly. He shook hands with me, though I must admit he looked at first as if he wondered at my cheek."

Meeto laughed heartily.

"Cheek. That is true American word. I have explained it to my father. He is learning the language and progresses well, only the irregular verbs puzzle him, as they did me once. In fact, my friend, we Japanese think we could very much your language improve, had we the authority."

"And where are you going now?" asked Jack, not noticing Meeto's idea, which was an old bone of contention between them.

"To be presented at court."

Then he leaned from the litter to say in a low tone to Jack:

"My dear friend, you were very rash the other night. Had I not been there you might have been cut to pieces. I ordered Double Sword to advance five minutes before the regular time, and he was almost too late as it was."

"Why, where were you?" asked Jack in surprise. "I never saw you."

Meeto was about to answer when a long, quivering cry came from the *samurai* in the rear, and he said hurriedly:

"We stop the way. Meet me at the port after the reception. Farewell."

And he was gone.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE PILOTS.

THE procession of lordly *daimios* and ruffing *samurai* occupied nearly an hour in passing through the broad avenue that led to the mikado's palace, and Jack Ely was much interested in watching the brilliant play of color in the dresses of the retainers as they passed.

Every great lord of a certain rank had a banner, and their retinues varied—from the needy, but pompous petty *saimio* or *kugee** who gloried in an umbrella, though compelled to walk on foot, to the great prince—from two to a hundred armed *samurai* or more.

Takewaka was dumb with awe and admiration as soon as he found that he was safe, and he said to his master:

"Most noble lord, why did I not know that you understood our language? I am as dirt in your sight, and am ready to shed my bowels on the ground at your command."

Jack smiled.

"You're such a liar it's fun to listen to you abusing the Christians, Takewaka. What a fool you are! They give you all you have. It's not your place to call them hogs. Leave that to the *daimios*."

Takewaka looked contrite.

"I have to do it, oh sau, to keep in the fashion. We all call them hogs in our own tongue, to keep the *samurai* in good humor when they see us serving the strangers and wearing swords."

"You're a liar, Takewaka, and you know it. I heard you calling me a hog the other night in the boat, when only your fellow coolies were present."

Takewaka hung his head.

"I must have been drunk, great lord."

"You were as sober as I am. The fact is, you're a great liar, but a funny fellow, and I shall take you with me to Kurosama and give you a good thrashing every time I find you doing anything you ought not."

* The *kugees* are supposed to be blood relations to the *mikado* and form a distinct race in Japan. The Rev. Norman McLeod has settled it to his own satisfaction that they are *Jews*, resting his claim on their marked Hebrew features. They are held sacred, but many are very poor, though all are proud as peacocks.

Takewaka grinned furtively.

"Your lordship is the sun of my heaven, and I will serve you to the end of the earth; but I hope your honor will not forbid me to tell of your greatness to all who will listen."

"You mean to lie about me? You can't tell the truth if you try. But take care your lies are not uncomplimentary, or you'll get the stick."

Takewaka gave a skip of delight.

"Your lordship shall be a prince, a king, a blood relation of the American mikado. All the world shall bow down to you."

Jack laughed at him, and they took their way to the port of Tokio, where only native vessels were moored, all the foreigners going to Yokohama.

Beside the quay, which was a handsome granite structure, lay a number of junks, gaudily painted and of various sizes, each with a huge pair of goggle eyes of glass, set in the bows.

The decks were nearly deserted, and Jack saw that the interior fittings of all were very rich.

He asked Takewaka carelessly:

"What are those big eyes for?"

"For the ship to see her way, great lord. How can a ship see without eyes?"

The answer was grave and decided, for Takewaka had no intention of lying, and firmly believed what he said.

Jack waited on the quay till a native policeman approached, and asked in broken English, rather suspiciously:

"What wantee?"

Jack answered in Japanese:

"I am looking at your vessels. To whom do they belong?"

"To the most noble lords from all parts of the empire," returned the man politely. "His majesty has sent for them all, to wish him happy New Year."

"You know the Prince Kurosama?"

"Yes, oh sau. Great lord, greater than all the rest, except Satsuma."

"Which is his vessel?"

The man pointed to a very gorgeous junk that lay at anchor outside the rest, her sides blazing with gold and vermilion, with bronze dragons and serpents coiling on the quarter-rail, two masts rising from the deck.

"That is the prince's ship," he said. "It is known as the Guardian of the Pilots."

Jack was struck by the name.

"Guardian of the Pilots? Why?"

The policeman seemed puzzled what to say, but at last made out to explain.

"Our coasts are dangerous, great sir, and we have storms and earthquakes, so that the channels are continually shifting. The Lord of Kurosama has the charge of the pilots. He is their protector from all that would hurt them, and they pay him tribute."

"But who would want to hurt a pilot? I thought all the world respected them. Do you mean the pilots that bring in our ships to Yokohama?"

The man shook his head.

"No, great sir. The foreign men-of-war, with the big guns protect their own pilots. The pirates dare not hurt them."

"The pirates?" echoed Jack interested. "Why I never heard of them—or rather never saw one. Where are they?"

The watchman pointed out to sea.

"Everywhere, great lord. Every *daimio* on the coast keeps a ship or more to take toll of the traders from Loochoo and China and the southern islands."

Jack began to understand.

"So that's it. They prey on native ships and fear our vessels."

The policeman shook his head.

"Only the big ones. They sometimes take a small ship and no one hears of her again. They are bad men."

"And they persecute the pilots?"

"Yes, great sir. It is the pilot's duty to take the ship into port without paying toll to the pirates; and the pirates, when they catch them, give them the stick to make them stop when they see them coming, after the lesson is over."

"And Prince Kurosama; what has he to do with all this?"

"It is his right to protect the pilots, and kill the pirates."

"Oho," thought Jack. "I begin to see now what Old Double Sword's duty must be."

He asked the policeman.

"And Old Double Sword. What is he? A pilot or a pirate?"

The policeman seemed to be embarrassed for he made no answer for nearly a full minute, when he said politely:

"If your honorable nobility will excuse me, it is a fair day for fishing, and my duties call me away."

He salaamed and went away, when Jack said to Takewaka:

"What ails the man?"

Takewaka made a grimace and muttered:

"Nayboon, great sir, nayboon."

Jack pished fretfully.

"Confound your old nayboons! What the dickens is this man? Every one seems to know

and none will tell me. Here, you, Takewaka, I'll give you the best thrashing you ever had in your life if you don't tell me about this man."

Takewaka looked sullen and laid his hand on his knife.

"If your honorable lordship orders me to commit happy dispatch," he said, "I am ready to do it."

And Jack, looking at the merry, lying, cowardly coolie he was used to despise, saw in the man's eye that he meant to do as he had said, rather than speak.

Takewaka was a merry, worthless rascal, but he would never betray the *dayboon* of his feudal lord.

Jack tried him once more.

"Are you a Kurosama man?"

Takewaka drew himself up proudly.

"I am, dread sir. The Kurosama clan is the greatest in the empire."

"After Satsuma?"

"Before Satsuma. We spit on Satsuma," was the positive reply. "Our lord rides all alone through the dogs of Satsuma and they dare not so much as bark at him for fear of his sword."

Jack was convinced.

"Then that policeman. What was he? He put Satsuma first."

Takewaka sneered:

"He's a Tokuwaga man!"

"A what?"

"A vassal of the Tokuwaga family. The last Tycoon was one of them, but now they are nobody—dirt—mud."

And Takewaka spat on the ground in the fullness of his contempt for the family that had once ruled in Japan, and had so suddenly fallen in it.

"Then why did he respect the *dayboon* of your family?" asked Jack.

Takewaka looked significantly after the retreating figure of the policeman, and said in a tone of immense importance:

"I was here."

Jack burst out laughing.

"You mean he was afraid of you?"

Takewaka nodded gravely.

"Yes, my lord. His life would not be worth two days when I told our *samurai*, nor would yours be better, were our *dayboon* betrayed."

Jack, for the first time since he heard of the *dayboon* felt a certain thrill of something very like fear. If a coward like Takewaka were capable of sacrificing his life for an idea or superstition, what would be the mood of the fierce *samurai*, when he left Yokohama and the protection of foreign men-of-war, to trust himself alone to the hospitality and mercy of Prince Kurosama?

He concluded that it would not be wise in him to indulge any curiosity about Old Double Sword, whatever the mystery might be, and with that thought he set himself to while away the time by examining the carvings, bronzes, and lacquer-work of the nearest junks, until the return of the grand procession from the mikado's palace.

After about an hour he saw it coming back, headed by two huge banners, which came side by side in front of two *norimons*.

Takewaka's eyes bulged out.

"Oh, sau," he said, looking frightened. "We are in a bad place. A very bad place."

"Why, Takewaka?"

"Yonder come the banners of Kurosama and Satsuma, side by side, and they may have a fight for precedence."

Jack smiled.

"I thought you said the Satsuma men were dogs, and that you didn't fear them."

Takewaka shivered.

"I told a lie, great sir. I am a miserable liar. They are terrible men. A Kurosama *samurai* is bad enough to a common fellow of his own clan; but a Satsuma man would kill me for fun."

"Then get behind me," said Jack, with some contempt, for he could not understand the coolie's feelings. "I'll take care of you."

Takewaka instantly threw his sword into the bay, and crouched down behind his master like a dog in a strange place, while the two banners advanced side by side to the quay, followed by an immense retinue.

As they came nearer Jack saw that the two leading litters were close to each other, the occupants apparently engaged in conversation.

When they came near the quay the two banners stopped, and a young *samurai* came running up to one of the litters, and prostrated himself before it.

Jack saw them stop, saw the young man rise and exchange a few words with the occupants, and then leave the long procession and come forward alone, revealing the figure of his friend Meeto.

Meeto looked smiling and joyful.

"It is all right," he broke out in English to Jack. "We have had our audience, and the emperor has been most gracious. He has insisted on reconciling my father and old Satsuma, and they are at peace for the first time in two hundred years. You are to come with us at once."

"But pardon me," said Jack, aghast. "I am not ready. My baggage—I did not intend to thrust myself on you so soon."

Meeto waved his hand with a slight air of gracious authority that became him well, as he interrupted:

"Pardon, gracious friend, but it must be! No one disobeys my father, and he has ordered it. I am only his slave, you know. We look on our fathers as they look on the mikado. It is sin to disobey. I will send for your baggage. We must come at once. You shall wear my clothes if you need any before your baggage arrives. Come, or they will be impatient."

He led the way, followed by Jack and his faithful coolie, across the decks of several junks to the outside one, when he stood and uttered a long, quivering cry.

A barge pulling twenty oars at once shot out from under the stern of the large junk in the stream, and Meeto jumped on board, followed by his friend, and was rowed to the side of the vessel.

Meeto Kurosama said a few words to the boatman, climbed into the junk, followed by Jack Ely and Takewaka, and away went the boat to the quay, now crowded with the retainers of the rival houses.

Jack, watching with great interest, saw two tall, white-headed figures emerge from the litters, and witnessed the ceremonious embrace of the two great chiefs, formally reconciled to each other.

Then old Kurosama bounded on his yacht; old Satsuma waved his hand, and turned away to enter one of the large junks by the quay-side; and the great lord of the pilots came aboard his vessel with his train of *samurai*, while the other junks were filling with the lesser clans.

The first thing the old chief did, on board was to extend his hand to Jack, and say in a solemn way, in broken English:

"How you do? I be glad see you. I hope you will please you. My son good boy. He told me of all you do'd in 'Merica. I speak pretty good well, be I not so?"

"You speak admirably, prince," said Jack, politely—"admirably."

The old prince smiled, with a pride in his English that was touching.

"We just go'd see mikado. He be'd glad see us. He say make friend Satsuma. Satsuma big fool!"

The close of his speech was so earnest that Jack had difficulty in keeping back a smile as he said:

"Why a big fool, prince?"

Old Kurosama seemed to be struggling with his stock of English words and finally relapsed into his native tongue.

"The Prince of Satsuma thinks that we are reconciled. It is well in port, but let him meet me on the high seas, and he will find whether my pilots will pull down their sails for him. No, by the beard of Taiko Sama! Our house has ruled the coasts for two hundred years, and no prince of Satsuma has ever taken the sword of Kurosama yet, nor shall."

Then he changed from his angry tone to one of extreme and winning courtesy.

"My young friend is welcome. He shall be to me as my own son Meeto, and we will call him by my name. He is worthy to be a Kurosama and lead our *samurai* in the battle. He is too good for a barbarian. Come, it shall be so."

Meeto made Jack a silent signal to assent to everything said by the old prince, and young Ely found himself in a single moment installed on the quarter-deck of a Japanese war-junk, as the adopted son of a mighty prince, will he, nill he; with a very vague idea of what his new position required of him, but a very firm conviction that the old Prince of Kurosama was used to having his own way in every thing, and a perfect despot to the soles of his bare feet.

CHAPTER XII.

GUEST OR PRISONER.

THE American had not long to indulge in thought, however, for the old prince gave a signal with his fan, when the *samurai* at once dashed at their work with a celerity Jack had not thought them to be capable of showing.

The huge sails of the junk were mastheaded as swiftly as they could have been done in a man-of-war, while the men on the fore-castle hauled in the cable by main strength on a clumsy sort of a capstan.

All the other junks were getting up their sails at the same time, and it appeared to be a race between them which should show the best crew and quickest work.

The Kurosama junk was easily ahead of all, though she had to get up her anchor, and the old prince smiled grimly as the wind took his

* Taiko Sama is the great man of Japan, her Charles Martel and Napoleon, the greatest warrior she ever had. His name was Hideyoshi, and he rose from poverty by his military talents to be Tycoon, and to unite all Japan in one empire. He lived in the 16th century and was the Tycoon who finally expelled the Christians for their turbulence. Taiko Sama is a title and means "The Great Man."

sails before the rest could cast off their head and stern lines, observing:

"Let Satsuma and all his friends try their best, the Guardian of Pilots will be at sea before them all."

Then he retired to his cabin, and Jack Ely, full of interest at his novel position, saw, for the first time in his life, a Japanese crew get under way and run out of the harbor of Yeddo.

"How like you our yacht?" asked Meeto in English, a little later.

Jack looked round him. It surprised him to hear a big clumsy thing like the junk called a "yacht," but he could not but admit that her fittings were worthy of the handsomest yacht.

She was built of teak, inlaid all along her bulwarks with ebony and ivory, in curious patterns, large panels filled with bronze bas-reliefs, that could not be bought in America for less than fifteen hundred dollars apiece, here as common as pine boards.

The very deck planks were laid in patterns of ebony and sandal-wood, and polished highly, while all along the quarter and poop rails crouched and wreathed bronze dragons, inlaid with gold in the style familiar to Japanese bronzes, now a lost art.

The stern of the junk was raised high in the air, so as to give ample cabin room, and the saloon within fairly blazed with gildings and lacquer-work; paintings on silk of birds and animals, executed so that they seemed to be starting alive from the surface; trophies of weapons and gorgeous bronzes, huge China vases, full of flowers and creeping plants.

A thoroughly Oriental scene, and one that could not have been duplicated in Europe or America for a million dollars, for the wealth lavished on it and the workmanship displayed.

"I think she is a wonderful vessel," said Jack with honest admiration. "When was she built?"

Meeto smiled rather proudly as he answered:

"The Guardian of the Pilots is more than two hundred years old, and as good as when she was first launched."

Jack was incredulous.

"You mean that—"

"I mean that, as she is now, so she was two hundred years ago. Of course she has been repaired, and we have added ornamentations. It is possible that in her there may be no single piece of timber that was in her when she first saw the sea."

"But all these carvings, bronzes, paintings, are old, very old. I remember them since I first saw anything. And our guns were cast in the days of Taiko Sama. Look at them and see."

Jack Ely looked at the long brass guns, ten of a side, that ornamented the junk.

They were extremely long, and covered with beautiful hammered work, the muzzles in the shape of dragon's heads, the carriages inlaid as extensively as pieces of furniture. Such magnificent guns he had never seen.

"But will they fire?" he asked.

Meeto nodded.

"They have been used in battle, and we have mowed down the pirates many a time with them."

"Pirates?" echoed Jack. "Is it really true that there are pirates left in these seas?"

"It is so true," answered Meeto in a low voice, "that more than half the lords who dwell on the coast take toll of the traders, and every one of those vessels that follow us to sea is concerned in it."

"Then why does not the Government put a stop to it?" asked Jack. "You have men-of-war, I see."

Meeto drew closer to him to whisper:

"I will tell you about it some other time. It is a delicate subject."

"Not *dayboon*, I hope."

Meeto smiled!

"Not exactly. You must not think that we have every thing *dayboon*. But since I have been in America I recognize that our land and people are very different from yours. You govern by the law of the people; we hold each lord responsible for his vassals. The princes have privileges coming down from the old times, and they do not give them up easily. The emperor is our father, but he is a long way off. We will talk of this at some other time. Now, we will go to dinner."

A queer dinner it was, Jack's first experience of Japanese ways. Each person had a little table of his own, about fifteen inches high, and sat on the floor by it.

There were no meats, for meat-eating is against the Buddhist religion.

There were fish of a dozen different sorts, rice and all kinds of vegetables, but everything was made into a hash and stewed in bowls, to be eaten with chop-sticks.

Jack had hard work to manage his sticks, but made shift by watching the old prince and Meeto to eat a sufficiency, while he quite enjoyed the tea, which came during the meal, and smoked a Japanese pipe with gusto after they went on deck.

The afternoon had set in scorching hot on shore, but at sea the breeze was delicious; and the junk was sweeping over the billows at a pace that surprised Ely, who had been accustomed to think junks dull sailers.

The land of Japan lay some ten miles off to windward on the quarter, and the sea was dotted with sails, a few white, as some foreign ship bore up for Yokohama, but more of the brown mats which native craft use for propulsion.

The junks of the *daimios*, who had come to sea with the Guardian of Pilots, were scattered about astern, some following her, others steering to shore to the dominions of their respective masters.

The porpoises and dolphins were leaping from the dark-blue waters of the *Kuro Sivo*, or "Black Stream," which sweeps the eastern shores of Japan just as our own Gulf Stream laves the coast of Florida, and with similar effect on the climate.

This "Japan Current," as it is called by our seamen, rises in the equatorial regions, and sweeps off in a grand curve past the southern islands of Japan, the southernmost of which—Kiusiu—it covers with perpetual verdure, and then strikes over to the North American Pacific coast, making California, Oregon and Alaska nearly thirty degrees warmer than those countries of the same latitude on the Atlantic coast, all owing to the immense body of warm water which washes their shores, just as the Gulf Stream similarly tempers the climate of Europe.

It was Jack Ely's first sight of this remarkable current, though he had been subjected to one of its disagreeable features in coming to Japan, in the form of the typhoon; for typhoons follow the Japan Current just as hurricanes follow the Gulf Stream.

But in the hurry of the storm he had not noted the change of color in the water, and now it struck him with surprise as being so dark, and fairly swarming with fishes, while the sea birds swept to and fro in flocks overhead.

The old prince noted his glance of pleasure over the scene, and gravely observed in his labored English:

"It be prospect charmingest, goodest, be it not so, young friend? Nature be goodest, bountifullest in our country so happy."

"It is indeed, prince," answered Jack in an earnest tone. "It seems to me that Japan is the most beautiful place I ever saw in my life."

The old gentleman smiled with gratification at the praise, and dropped into his native tongue as he grew animated.

"It is the garden of the world, my son, and our people are the kings. It is true that your people have much that is superior to us in the arts and sciences, and I have sent my son and heir to your country to learn them; but after all it is on our old people, on our old customs, on all that is old, we must depend for the welfare of the empire. I own that I hate the foreigners. You are no longer one. You are my son's brother. You have fought for him and with him, and will become one of us. But for the others, I still look forward to the time when we shall be alone again, as we used to be, before the degenerate Tycoon made his degrading treaty with foreigners."

And the old prince puffed at his pipe and looked very wise and obstinate, while Jack Ely was thinking to himself that he had never seen such a bundle of prejudices before.

It was not very long, however, before the old man, accustomed to indulge his every whim, tired of looking at the beautiful scene and went into the cabin to take a nap, without so much as the ceremony of taking leave, and Jack Ely thought to himself that Japanese manners were decidedly rough.

Perhaps he showed a little of this in his face, for Meeto, who seemed relieved at his father's absence, said in English:

"You are surprised at the departure of my father without saluting you. That is a proof that he looks on you, as on me, as his son. We obey our parents absolutely, and they take our obedience and respect as a matter of course. It is not democratic here, you know. Quite the reverse. Our society is a flight of stairs. The mikado is at the top of the state, the *daimios* beneath him, the people at bottom. In the family the father is the absolute head; the children are slaves, as I told you, but willing ones. You do not know that our fathers have the power of life and death over us. It is true."

Jack began to feel rather uncomfortable.

"And over their adopted children too?" he asked, with such an accent that Meeto burst out laughing and answered:

"Be not afraid, my friend, they never exercise it. Yes it is true. You are on your good, on your best behavior while you are with us; but we must insist that you remain with us."

"But I have other views," returned Jack, in some dismay. "I had no intention of coming here to live forever away from my own land."

Meeto did not heed him in the least as he answered calmly:

"That is natural; but after all, you must remember that my father is absolute lord of his subjects as much as the mikado, and it is a great compliment to you that he should select you for his adopted son. Come, we will make you happy. You shall pick out a wife from the prettiest maidens of Kiu-iu. If you wish a dozen you shall have them. You shall live in the palace with us, and be a prince as much as I am. It is

"But why do you wish me to do all this?" asked Jack, rather uneasily.

Meeto looked at him affectionately.

"My dear friend," he said, "I love you dearly. You stood between me and insult when I was in a strange land and alone; you helped me in my tasks and stood my friend when I had none other. Now I am going to stand yours. Moreover I have a great task to perform, and I shall need help. You must help me. You know not our people as I do. They are but semi-barbarians as yet. I did not know it when I left this country as a boy. My father does not know it yet. I thought then, as he thinks now, Japan the world, its people the princes of the world, and all the rest of the globe inhabited by barbarians. I know the difference now, and I know what a task it will be for us, who have been educated abroad, to dispel the ignorance of our countrymen. I saw that in America, and saw I should need a helper. I found one in you. My dear friend you must not refuse. You are necessary to me, and must support me."

Jack saw, from a certain mixture of pleading and firmness in Meeto, that he had made up his mind to retain his friend at all hazards, if he had to do it as a prisoner; and that he would have to make up his mind to submit for the present as gracefully as he could.

Moreover, there was no doubt that his new position, as adopted son of the great *daimio*, would give him just the advantages he had hoped to attain for the benefit of his uncle's firm. He would be in a position of intimacy and entitled to speak at all times on business.

"Tell me," he said, after revolving all these things in his mind, "suppose I consent to stay and help you, will you hold me to changing my country for good, and becoming a Japanese?"

Meeto nodded and compressed his lips.

Jack did the same with some anger.

"Hem!" he said, "you're frank at all events."

"Is it not better to be so?"

"Possibly, but you seem to forget one thing."

"And what is that?"

"That you virtually decoyed me on board this vessel and that you have made me a prisoner under the guise of a guest."

Meeto smiled coldly as he answered:

"My dear friend, only as a guest. You are free as the wind, save for one thing."

"And that is?"

"You must remain with us. We love you too much to let you go."

"Very well, sir. I might have had a right to expect that from a barbarian; but not from you, Meeto, my college chum. You know better, sir. You're not an ignorant barbarian, and by heavens, sir, I think your conduct is by no means gentlemanly. Is that plain?"

Jack was angry and he showed it; but his anger had no effect on Meeto Kurosama.

The young prince merely smiled and parried the assault with all the skill of an Asiatic:

"Ah, then, I am to understand that you look on the invitation of the Prince Kurosama to visit him in his palace as a thing to be despised? Yet, my dear friend, you expressed your desire to come this very day."

Jack colored slightly.

"I did. That's true; but a guest and prisoner are two very different things."

"To be sure," returned Meeto with the same imperturbable smile. "But you are not a prisoner; you are our honored guest, and, at your command, any of my father's vassals would peril his life. It is something, as you will find, to be the son of Kurosama."

"At all events," said Jack resignedly, "you'll let me go to Yokohama now and then to see my people, won't you?"

"Most assuredly; on your promise to return. My dear friend, you and I are to be missionaries of civilization to these people, and so long as you promise to assist me you shall be as free as air."

Jack felt a little relieved.

"That alters the case, Meeto. You know us Yankees. We'll do a good deal for a friend, but we hate to be driven. I'll stay. By the by, you said something about missionaries. You remember Miss Hastings on the Golden Gate? Do you know if her father is anywhere in your dominions?"

Meeto nodded a little coldly.

"Yes. He is one of the few men of your land who is a nuisance to us, but we tolerate him."

"Why? Why a nuisance?"

Meeto curled his lip.

"He preaches, preaches all the time, and tries to convert our people. For my part, I think it was a pity they didn't kill him in the revival of ancient customs."

* "Revival of ancient customs." This is the name given by the Japanese to the reactionary movement of 1863; when every one expected to see the foreigners expelled by the mikado's order, and when the Satsuma men murdered missionaries. The movement failed. The Tycoon was dead against it and the mikado weakened before the presence of foreign men-of-war. The disappointment of the prejudiced old *daimios* at not seeing their desire fulfilled, had a good deal to do with the subsequent deposition of the Tycoon. They laid it all to him.

"The what?"

"The revival of ancient customs. What you call 1863."

"Oh, I see. And you're sorry he wasn't killed? You're a barbarian yet, Meeto."

Meeto laughed.

"No. Only a missionary-hater."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MISSIONARY'S DAUGHTER.

OUT in the suburbs of Kurosima, capital of the province of Kurosama, the camellias were blooming in the hedge-rows, as common as our daisies, with hundreds of rare flowers that with us are kept only in hot-houses; palms and beeches waved side by side, and all the products of temperate and tropical zones flourished together.

The landscape was cut up into myriads of small square fields, in which men and women toiled, and elegant villas stood proudly in the midst of their lordly parks, on either side the high-road to Kagosima, capital of the rival province of Satsuma.

Down in a little valley, flanked by bold bluffs, and right under the walls of the castle of Prince Kurosama, nestled a little cottage in the Japanese style; and, in the garden, lying back in a large wicker chair of native manufacture, imitated for the foreign market from American models, was Flora Hastings, trying to study a French Japanese grammar, but plainly having her mind far away.

At a little distance placidly sewing, sat her aunt, Miss Hoyt, and both ladies were clad in the simple Japanese costume; a long robe girt with a broad silk *obi* or sash.

Both had their hair clubbed with hosts of hair-pins in the Japanese style, though their faces were very unlike the native features, and both looked pale and thin with a certain anxious expression that told of danger round them.

Flora kept glancing up and round her from her book as she studied, her lips moving as she repeated the words in a desperate attempt to keep her attention fixed, but at last she dropped the pretense, and said, with something like a sob:

"I can't, auntie—I can't read! Oh, how I wish I had your placid temperament!"

Miss Hoyt raised her mild eyes to her niece's, to answer:

"My dear, we can only wait. We are in God's hands, and he has taken care of us so far. He will not desert us."

Flora shuddered slightly.

"But he does sometimes—no, I don't mean that; but he lets his missionaries be killed and tortured. You know that, auntie. You have often told me of my own birth in the midst of perils. They may come again. This odious wretch who seems bent on hunting us down so much! He is in power with the prince, and may take it into his head any day to accuse poor father of inciting a rebellion. What would become of us then?"

The old spinster had some ado to control her own face into calmness, as she answered:

"It is all for the best, Flora. We, who are early in the field, must bear the burden and heat of the day. Tokichiro Kama is a bad man; but we have, I think, a friend in young Kurosama. He will hold us from harm. He has been educated in America, as you know, and he was very agreeable on board."

"I don't trust him," said the younger lady uneasily. "I don't trust any of them, with their sly ways and polite smiles. Oh, auntie! I wish father would only go away. He could get a parish at home anywhere, and do so much better."

"And who would take care of our little flock of converts?" asked the old lady. "Are their souls of less value than those of rich people at home, who have their pick of ministers? Your father has his special value here, and no new man could take his place. He talks the language like a native now; knows all their ways, and his converts love him."

"But the *daimios* hate him," said Flora.

"I know it, my child," answered the spinster quietly. "He has often told me that he expects to die a violent death some day for the truth; but, as he says, what of that? No cross, no crown, Flora. A missionary must stay at his post like a soldier. He knew that, when he sent us away. He did not wish you to come to him to share his peril. Even now, if you wish, we can go back. No one has a right to expose you to peril against your will."

Flora flushed deeply.

"Send me away? Now, when I know the peril? No auntie; you know me better than that. Do you think I could be happy, knowing that my father was in deadly peril, and I safe?"

"No, I do not, but—"

"But," interrupted Flora, hurriedly, "but, it seems to me so much toil for so little—so much danger for no good end; and I want to tear father away and let us all flee together. Here he has been, you say, for thirty-five years, and in all that time has made but thirty converts—one a year, nearly. Is that worth the danger and discomfort? To herd with heathens, and live in the midst of their barbarous ways? I declare, I

dare not go out on the high-road here for very shame at what goes on in broad daylight!"

The poor girl alluded to the Japanese custom of the huge tub of hot water before the door, in which all the members of the household bathe, without the slightest sentiment of impropriety.

Miss Hoyt bit her lips.

"It's the custom of the country," she said in a cold tone. "Look the other way and pass on. Besides, they only wash after work, and even public bathing is better than public dirt."

Flora shook her head and went on with her grammar, but presently burst out:

"I don't care; I'm not going to be happy till father goes back. I'd no idea a missionary's life was like this. And I won't go back without him. I'll die first. He must come."

Miss Hoyt put down her work. She had the true unbending Puritan spirit under all her gentleness, and had been brought up with the idea that a missionary was a divine being.

"Flora," she said severely, "no more of this. If you are afraid to suffer the ordinary trials of a missionary's life, say the word and you shall go back. But your father, with all his troubles, must not and shall not be disturbed by your constant complaints."

Flora was about to answer when the deep booming of guns out at sea caused her to start and exclaim with a shudder:

"Oh, what's that? More horrid noises. They're all the time at it."

"Tis the prince with his retinue coming back from Tokio," said Miss Hoyt quietly. "They were to go to reception yesterday. If you want to distract your mind go up on the side hill and you can command a view."

Flora shook her head.

"I don't want any view. I hate the place and I hate the people. You may talk as you please, auntie, but I won't give it up yet. It cannot be right for a father to be separated from his child for the sake of these savages. His first duty is to me. Doesn't St. James say—"

Miss Hoyt stopped her with uplifted hand.

"That will do, Flora. No quoting Scripture to me. You know what Shakespeare says about it."

Flora did not answer, but looked decidedly sullen and rebellious.

The fact is, the girl, brought up in comfort at home, and coming down to the hard realities of a missionary's life, was intensely disgusted and alarmed at all she saw.

Her father, a narrow, enthusiastic Puritan by nature, with visions of flaming hells constantly before his mind, thought of nothing but how to convert the ignorant peasants round him from their Buddhism and idolatry; and labored incessantly, in and out of season, to that end.

He disputed with *bouzes*, ridiculed the little prayer-mills* set up at the roadside temples, told the peasants that their gods were only stocks and stones, but as yet had only succeeded in irritating the complacent and worldly Japanese, with very small returns of converts. The few he had made came from the poorest classes, virtually serfs like the early Christians of Rome, attracted by the promise of a happiness in the next world which hard fate denied them in this.

The *damios* and *samurai* treated him with contempt as a madman, when they did not threaten him for "preaching sedition," as they called it, and his life was much like that led by the early Christians in Rome, one of constant trial, poverty and danger. Yet the man came of good family in his native State, had enough money to keep his daughter at home, and lived from choice, not necessity, on the meager pittance allowed him by the board of missions.

He lived and dressed in native style because it was cheap, and because it brought him in closer contact with his flock, and consequently he became an object of contempt to all natives.

Flora Hastings, young, pretty and high-spirited, saw and felt all this keenly. She had been taught the language by her aunt, and had come over full of enthusiasm and hope. The first thing that changed her opinions was the epithets she heard applied to her father by the ruffing *samurai* of Prince Kurosama, when they happened to swagger into the village near by.

"Hog of a Christian! Poor fool! Lunatic! Dog and son of a dog!" were the mildest, and they frequently threatened to cut off his ears for fun, while it was by no means uncommon for a party to pass him in single file on the street, every man spitting on him as he went.

A few such scenes had at first frightened, then

* "Prayer-mills" are peculiar to the present practice of Buddhism, though very far from its abstract principles. They stand by every roadside temple, a wheel full of compartments, in each of which a prayer is put, after being written out. So many turns of the wheel so many prayers, at so much a head, the *bouzes* or priests keeping a supply constantly on hand. The same prayer can of course be used indefinitely, as long as the paper holds out, and it saves a good deal of trouble for every man to do his praying by machinery.

angered her to the utmost recesses of her spirit, and when to this were added the insults of *samurai* and peasants alike, to herself, as the Christian's daughter, the revulsion was complete.

Not buoyed up, as were her father and aunt by intense religious fanaticism, she sickened with disgust and thrilled with impotent anger at the uselessness of maintaining a missionary station in such a place, when thirty years had left public opinion in such a state toward Christianity.

The very converts disgusted her, for the most part, being more than half lazy hypocrites, who became Christians for what they could get out of the missionary; and, out of thirty, not more than half a dozen seemed to her to be sincere.

When to all this was finally added the open admiration and insolent advances of Tokichiro Kama, a young *saimio* or petty lord, tributary to Kurosama, it is no wonder the girl fretted against her fate and longed to escape it.

Tokichiro Kama was a big, powerful young fellow, with but two ideas and one conviction in his head.

The ideas were—fencing-school, and the training of hawks in the field—the conviction was, that Tokichiro Kama was absolutely irresistible among ladies.

So he came courting Flora Hastings, though he had two wives already, and made the poor girl more wretched than before, from his boastful way of wooing; for Tokichiro believed with William the Conqueror, that the way to capture a lady's heart was to knock her down with a club and roll her in the mud.

Yet Miss Hoyt and her father, in their narrow bigotry—as bad in its way as that of the Buddhists—treated all these annoyances as trifles, frowned when she complained, and wouldn't even allow her to quote St. James on the first duty of a man being toward his family.

"Don't quote scripture to me," pursued Miss Hoyt, still more severely. "The devil can quote scripture for his purpose. Your father cannot throw away all the results of thirty years just to gratify your discontent."

"Discontent!" echoed Flora. "Is that a sin in me? What do you wish me to do? To become the third wife or mistress of this barbarous chief to advance the cause?"

Miss Hoyt tossed her head angrily.

"That's not necessary. But if Tokichiro would turn Christian and divorce his other wives, you might save a human soul, Flora."

So blinded was the old maid by the prejudices of her training and the influence of the Westminster catechism, she actually said it.

As for Flora, she bit her lips, her eyes flashed, and only her extreme affection for her aunt prevented her breaking out into a retort that might have stung the old maid into more anger than she had ever shown, when both were interrupted by the fresh booming of guns, and the hurried entrance into the garden of the missionary himself, exclaiming:

"Flora, Flora, my child! The prince has come back, and with him they say, is his son, returned from America! It is a great day for our cause. I feel that it cannot fail of a blessed effect."

He was a tall, thin man, prematurely old, with a face that had been handsome, but was deeply furrowed with lines of care between the brows, and on either side the mouth. He was attired in Japanese style and cleanly shaven to the top of his head, in exact imitation of native gentlemen with his back hair clubbed in their manner, but wore no sword or any weapon.

Flora looked up at him with traces of her recent agitation on her face as she asked coldly:

"Why do you think so?"

"Because he has seen our country and heard our blessed religion preached from lips more eloquent than mine," returned Mr. Hastings warmly. "He cannot fail but return to us a Christian at heart; and oh, if we can only induce him to come out boldly for the truth, what an enormous influence it must have for good. Flora, you don't know, child, how sadly I feel my own grievous shortcomings, how often I am despondent and ready almost to give up the fight—"

Flora interrupted him with a cry of positive delight, as she sprung up.

"Is it indeed so, father?" she cried, and she threw herself on his neck. "Then why not give it up now, before it is too late? Why stay here to be mocked, insulted, spit upon, when there is no hope of ever weaning these brutal barbarians from their errors? Why not give up the fight and come back to our own dear land, where you can do some good? I am wretched here, miserable, exposed to all sorts of insult. You don't see, and auntie will not open her eyes. Oh father, for God's sake, let us leave this country; let us go home. I shall die if I stay here! It's killing me! God can't mean us to stay here, at such a sacrifice, for such a pitiful result, after thirty years of thankless toil."

The missionary had listened to her at first with surprise. Then a spasm of anger crossed his face, but the evil influence of his daughter changed it, and it was with gentle reproach he answered:

"Flora, child, are thirty souls, saved from the fires of eternal torment, a pitiful result for our efforts? Child, child, don't you know this world is a fleeting shadow? Are you willing to barter away Heaven for a few short hours of ease and pleasure here? Think of the lake of fire waiting for these sinners! Think of the endless torments going on for all eternity! Think of them all writhing in hell forever and ever, while we are enjoying ourselves softly and delicately, and tell me whether any sacrifice, torment, death, disgrace, we poor worms can suffer here is worthy to be counted as a feather in the scale if we can thereby save a single soul from its fiery doom!"

The fanatical missionary had warmed up into a partial frenzy of religious exaltation as he spoke, his voice rising higher and higher, as if he were exhorting in meeting, and he ended by thrusting away his daughter at arm's length, ejaculating:

"Never! never! Go, child, go! I was foolish to let you come. You are a child of this world. Go to your pleasures, go! But for me, my hand is on the plow, and it is death to look back. Anathema maranatha! Never! never! Give up now, when the day of my triumph comes glorious over the mountains! Now, when the son of this mighty prince is ready to my hand as an instrument of salvation! Flora, Flora, the Evil One hath hold of thee! Now, more than ever, is my time to stay, for the crisis of the battle has come."

Poor Flora, stunned and overwhelmed by the torrent of Biblical phrases, broke down and burst into tears, sobbing:

"You don't love me; you don't love me. You would let me perish ten times over to save one of these nasty Japanese brutes. Oh, dear; I wish I had never come to Japan."

The clash of a sword and step of a man announced an intruder on the scene at that very moment.

CHAPTER XIV.

TOKICHIRO'S WOOING.

THE new-comer was Tokichiro Kama, in full fig, with his two swords stuck out at an angle of forty-five degrees, his new clogs elevating him several inches above his ordinary stature, a smile of mingled vanity and insolence on his face.

"I salute you, Christian *bouze*," he said to Hastings, with a mocking politeness that was more insulting than rudeness. "You have a fine daughter there, and she is worth some money to you. I want a woman in my house. Come, what will you take for her?"

It was the first time he had ever seen Hastings in Flora's presence and spoken so boldly.

For a moment the missionary trembled and paled at the audacity of the *saimio*, who was followed by a couple of swaggering *samurai*, and then the instinct of the father overcame the artificial education of the missionary to spiritless submission to insult, and he folded his child in his arms and said:

"My daughter is not for sale, Tokichiro Kama. Christians sell not their children."

Tokichiro laughed, as he replied:

"Come; I want her very much, and I will give you what you want for her. You are right to make a good bargain. I want her very badly, and will pay well."

Miss Hoyt, in her blind enthusiasm, thought this a good opportunity, and interposed.

"Tokichiro Kama, are you willing to do anything to obtain our daughter?"

Tokichiro stared at her.

"Why, yes. If you wish a great price, I will pay a thousand *kokas* of rice, for I want her."

"Will you marry her publicly?" asked the old man severely.

Tokichiro laughed.

"Why, of course, I shall be proud of her."

"And will you put away your other wives?"

Tokichiro started and moved uneasily.

"No, no. That is too much to ask. Besides, I could not offend their families."

"Then you cannot have this girl," said aunt Mehitable Hoyt firmly, and with that she got in front of Flora as bold as a hen before her chickens, continuing:

"I tell you, you cannot have her, unless you put away all other wives and become a Christian as she is. There, sir."

Tokichiro looked first at the missionary, then the old maid, then the girl.

He evidently wavered.

At last he broke out:

"Well, I'll divorce O'Matz and O'Katz. There, that's all I'll do. A thousand *kokas* of rice, and I'll pay it to-day."

He evidently expected his liberal offer would produce instant compliance; but aunt Mehitable shook her head.

"You can't have her unless you become a Christian too."

Tokichiro spread out his hands.

"Now, lady, be reasonable. How can I do that, when the prince might order me to do happy dispatch for my folly? Be reasonable. I won't interfere with her religion. I'll let her

go to your temple as much as she wants, and I'll go sometimes myself, to please her. But you can't ask me to do any more."

Miss Hoyt compressed her lips.

"It's no use," she said, "you can't have Flora unless you become a Christian."

Tokichiro Kama frowned and turned away, flinging at the handle of his sword, for a minute, then burst out:

"By the beard of Taiko Sama I tell you I will have her! Do you hear that? I will have her. Do you suppose I'm going to let that old Christian *bouze* go about defiling our temples, and have him refuse me his daughter? No, no. You give her to me to-night, and I'll do as I've said before, and to-morrow the prince will give her to me. Do you understand that?"

In a great rage he turned on Hastings:

"And as for you, old limb of the Christian devil, I'll cut you in half, if you don't stop calling our gods bad names. You see if I don't, pig! dog! Christian!"

So saying, he turned on his heel and stalked away when Flora, pale as death, clung to her father sobbing out:

"Oh, father, father, for God's sake let us flee from this dreadful country, while there is time. We have friends in the castle. Young Meeto Kurosama; we met him on the vessel. Surely he will aid us to escape. He only wishes us away. Surely you would not sacrifice me to that barbarian, for the sake of keeping up this miserable farce of a mission. Oh, save me, for God's sake."

The old missionary had been silent during the scene with Tokichiro, his lips moving as if in prayer, and now he said:

"The Lord's will be done, Flora. I looked for you to comfort me in my old age, but the dream is gone. You must fly. The prince will not suffer Tokichiro to use violence to a foreign lady, but here as my daughter, you have no safety. You must go. Mehitable, sister, take her with you and return home. Our funds will not permit your staying in Yokohama. I will ask the prince to give us passage. He is not unkind, though he be a heathen. You must go."

"But you will go too, will you not?" asked Flora, eagerly clinging to him.

Hastings shook his head.

"No, child, no; my place is here, where it has been for thirty years. I stay."

"Then I stay too," answered Flora boldly. "You may make up your mind to that, father. If you persist in throwing yourself away among these dirty, degraded wretches, I stay too. If I am disgraced, ruined, killed by these people, you will have yourself to thank for it. Either we both go, or both stay to be killed."

Her father looked at her severely.

"Child, remember the fifth commandment! How shall you hope to escape the torments of the eternal fires if you disobey your father?"

Flora positively laughed.

The reaction of nature against a formal Puritan education had set in with her in the light of experience; and the fearful danger to which she was exposed, and for which neither her father nor her aunt seemed to feel half the fear they ought, rendered her desperate.

"Eternal fires!" she exclaimed, and she actually snapped her fingers.

"Do you know that you're preaching to these heathens what your own people no longer believe, father? Eternal fires! Well, take your choice; save your own daughter from them, or save these brutes around us. I tell you I don't believe it. I'm as bad a heathen as any here. Now will you stay here? Will you go to work and save your own soul for Heaven by making your life here a hell, and then have the pleasure of sitting up among the harps and looking at me—at your own flesh and blood—writhing in the flames? Make your choice; for I tell you, if you will not come away and save me from this place, I shall be the one that will be burned forever, not these Japanese brutes. If you love them better than me, stay with them."

The girl was nearly beside herself in her outraged modesty and common-sense. The whole hollowness and falsity of missionary life in Japan stood out in lurid colors before her eyes and made her reckless.

It seemed to her so useless, so wicked that she should be taken from a comfortable home in America, forced to all sorts of homely and degrading occupations among a crowd of ignorant, half-bestial heathens, for the sake of the thirty slaves and hypocrites that represented the result of her father's labors in Kiroshima.

She felt with Bob Ingersoll, at the moment, that more crimes were committed for religion than it was worth; and like Bob, she was only half right, and overshot the mark.

As for her father, for a moment he stood with dilated eyes staring at her as if he thought her crazy, and then he sunk down on his knees and buried his face in his hands, completely overwhelmed.

He said nothing, but Flora saw from the moving of his lips that he was praying earnestly, while the expression of his face was that of such utter woe and horror that the girl's heart smote her and she rushed at him and hugged him, sobbing out:

"No, no, I didn't mean it, I didn't mean it. I'll stay with you, I'll die with you, father; but oh it's so hard, so hard, and I'm so young to be buried here forever."

The missionary listened and seemed to grow calmer in the necessity of calming another, but it was strange how his intense conviction of the rectitude of his own course hardened his heart against the promptings of nature, for, when he spoke, it was to pray aloud for deliverance from the snares of the great enemy of all who was tempting him to desert his post.

"I know thee well enough, thou old devil," he said aloud, in that mixture of familiarity and scripture-language that is so common in men of his stamp. "I know thee well, Satan, that has taken possession of my daughter, as thou didst of her mother before her. But I'll beat you yet, you old serpent. We'll hold fast to the rock yet, and you can stay in the midst of your flames, you old thief. You sha'n't get my little flock, you sha'n't get me. I defy you in the name of the Lord, for whom I am willing to give up all, father, mother, wife, children and all."

Then he rose and held out his daughter by the shoulders, crying out aloud:

"And he shall not take thee either, child. We will beat him yet. Pray, pray hard, sister Mehitable! Pray, that this brand may be snatched from the burning. Keep her in the faith, sister; keep her steadfast. Satan hath desired mightily to have her, but we'll beat him yet, the old thief; we'll beat him yet."

His voice rose into a kind of shriek at the last words, and he rushed away into the house, where they soon heard him praying aloud, with all the intense fervor of a lively camp-meeting, for strength to persevere to the end, his voice ringing out over the garden and into the neighboring village, so that the people came out to listen.

As for Flora, she felt a mingled sense of fright and humiliation at the whole thing. She had never seen it before she came to Japan, for her father had retained the ways of the exhorters of thirty years before, while she had been brought up in modern style. The extravagance, the misuse of scripture shocked her, and over all hung the sense of actual imminent danger to herself, which her father and aunt seemed, for the time, to ignore.

Miss Hoyt, indeed, had a great deal of sympathy for her niece, and had she been the same woman she had been two weeks before on the steamer, would have taken her part openly.

But Mehitable Hoyt had been bitten with the missionary fever since she came back under her half-brother's influence, and began already, like him, to look on every prompting of nature as a snare of the devil, and on human feelings as wiles of the Evil One to drag her into that pit of torment which Brother Hastings had constantly before his vision.

She listened to Hastings raving in his room, and said to Flora, severely:

"See what pain you have caused by your disobedience, to that blessed man. Pray to be forgiven for it. Pray for faith to trust the Lord, Flora. Pray that your stubborn and impenitent heart may be softened and I will go and pray for you."

With that the old maid departed into the house and left Flora alone in the garden, wondering whether it were possible she could be right when every one was against her, and whether it would be a possible thing for her ever to overcome her repugnance to Japanese ways.

Tokichiro Kama had gone off in a huff, that was one comfort, and she trusted that young Meeto Kurosama would interpose in her favor, if the insolent *saimio* executed his threat of demanding her as his wife.

She took up her book and went to the end of the garden, where stood a little summer-house on a side hill which commanded a view of Kiroshima Bay and the open sea.

Thence she looked forth:

The town of Kiroshima lay on the other side of Kurosama's castle, out of sight from where she was, for the missionary had only gotten his permission to reside on condition of keeping at the edge of the fields and away from the center of population.

Three or four houses, part of a village called Kamoske, belonging to Tokichiro, were the nearest to the mission cottage, and below the castle by the bay stood the residences of a few fishermen.

Out in the bay the "Guardian of Pilots" had come to an anchor, surrounded by small native craft, and Flora could not help an involuntary thrill of admiration at the beauty of the scene around her.

"Oh," she murmured to herself, "if the people were only decent! But such wretches!"

She shuddered with aversion as she thought of Tokichiro Kama, and it was almost at the same moment that she heard the voice of that interesting gentleman himself, in the shrubbery at the top of the side hill, talking to some one.

Kurosama's castle, like that of most Japanese distinguished men, was planted in a lovely spot, for the Japanese enjoy nature. It stood on the edge of a bold bluff, which formed one

side of the valley in which Flora stood, and melted into slopes at either end.

Massive stone walls, flanked with towers, made the lower part resemble a medieval castle, but these frowning defenses were crowned with quaint pagodas and pavilions, that showed how modern luxury had driven out old-fashioned sternness.

Just above the summer-house was a postern in the base of the wall, that opened on a path leading down to the very place where Flora stood; for the summer-house belonged to the castle, and the missionary's dwelling only stood where it did on sufferance, and for the benefit of protection from above.

Tokichiro was coming down, talking to some one, and Flora, fearing to be seen, hid herself in a thicket near by, and crouched down, her heart palpitating violently.

"From the summer-house, great lord, I can show you all my dominions," said Tokichiro to the stranger, "and I can assure you that all of the prince's vassals yield in valor and good looks to my men."

"Tokichiro Kama is very good," said a voice that Flora did not recognize at first, "but I am not inspecting the prince's vessels. I am merely looking for the foreign priest who lives here. Which is his cottage?"

"Out yonder," returned Tokichiro indifferently. "He is mad as we think, or we would have sent him away long ago. But he does no great harm, and moreover, has a most beautiful daughter. I am going to ask her of the prince to-morrow. She is worth a thousand *kokas*."

"I am surprised," returned the other voice, "that you should think of such a thing. Do you not know that the prince has no rights over the foreigners? You cannot take a foreign lady unless she consents to marry you."

Tokichiro laughed, and Flora saw him pass to the summer-house together with a person dressed in Japanese style, whose face she could not see.

"You do not know our laws," said Tokichiro. "The prince only allows this Christian dog to stay here as a slave, and any time he pleases he can sell him as a slave. The man consented when he came. His daughter is a fine girl, and I am going to have her."

The other man turned round, revealing to Flora's intense amazement the face of Jack Ely, whom she had never dreamed of seeing.

"Look you, Tokichiro Kama," he said, "you are a fool. Before you take that girl I will kill you myself."

Tokichiro started back in amazement at the sudden anger of the stranger. Then his face flushed, and he cried:

"Enough said. The sword decides."

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN.

For a moment Flora Hastings was dumb with amazement. What in the world could Jack Ely be doing here in Japanese dress, on apparently intimate terms with Tokichiro?

It was an enigma to her.

She saw Tokichiro treat him at first as a superior, and now he seemed to be angry at him, for he laid his hand on his sword.

Jack Ely, on the other hand, merely shook his finger close to the *saimio's* nose, and answered his threat:

"Tokichiro Kama, you know who I am. Take your hand from that sword or it will be the worse for you."

And Tokichiro, to Flora's still greater surprise, hesitated and dropped his hand, saying:

"I know you are the son of Kurosama, and I cannot lift my hand against you; but for all that, I will appeal to the prince. These Christians must be turned out."

Jack curled his lip contemptuously.

"You fool," he said laughingly, "do you suppose the prince is going to listen to fellows like you, with a following of less than a dozen *samourais*? Go to your house! I told you to guide me to the missionary's cottage. I need you no more."

Tokichiro ground his teeth. He was half a head taller than Jack, and prided himself on his abilities as a fencer and wrestler.

"It is well for you," he said sullenly, "that my lord has thrown his robe over you. If it were not for that, I would show you."

Jack Ely laughed at him.

"Let not that deter you, Tokichiro Kama," he said scornfully. "Draw your sword and we will call it a fencing bout."

Tokichiro obeyed, but before he could get fairly on guard the sword was struck from his hand, sent flying over the edge of the bank by the young American, who pointed to it where it lay, saying:

"Go get your sword, Tokichiro, and learn that Kurosama adopts none but warriors, able to conquer any man in the clan."

Tokichiro was so much astounded by his sudden and ignominious discomfiture, that he turned without a word, went to his sword, picked it up and sheathed it quietly, then furtively shook his fist at Ely in the summer-house, and departed for his own house, which lay at the other end of the valley.

As for Flora, she started up as soon as he was

gone, and made a silent signal to Jack, as he looked round at the rustle in the bushes, which he understood as a sign to take no notice till Tokichiro had gone.

He watched the departing figure of the young Japanese till Tokichiro vanished in the shrubbery surrounding his villa, then said to Flora, in a low voice:

"You are here, like myself, wishing you were not here, Miss Hastings, is it not so?"

Flora sighed deeply.

"Oh, Mr. Ely, what a change from the Golden Gate! How came you in this horrible place?"

Jack looked surprised.

"Horrible place! Why, I have found it very pleasant. Is it possible you do not?"

Flora shuddered.

"Pleasant! How can you say that? Do you know what it is to be a Christian in this country? It is fearful."

"Nay," said Jack. "No one has said a word to me about religion. Have they to you?"

"Have they? We are insulted every day and hour, my father and myself."

Jack frowned.

"Is that true? Then, by heavens, I'll put a stop to that at once, Miss Hastings."

"You! How can you help it?"

"You'll see. But I must tell you how I came to be here. I have been adopted by old Prince Kurosama to be Meeto's brother, and he has just introduced me to all his vassals as their lord, together with Meeto."

Flora clasped her hands.

"Oh, how thankful I am! And will you really be able to protect my father?"

Jack hesitated.

"I can protect him from molestation, as long as he does not interfere with the *bonzes*, but I confess, Miss Hastings, that the old prince has made one exception to my powers. He says that he has no objection to the Christians exercising their own religion, as long as they do not interfere with that of the state. If they do that, the utmost he will consent to is that they shall be banished without being killed."

Flora's countenance brightened.

"Will you tell my father that? Will you show him how hopeless is his task, and induce him to come away and turn his powers into a more fruitful field?"

"I will, gladly," answered Jack, "if you will introduce me to him. Allow me to say, Miss Hastings, that the Japanese dress looks very charming on you, but that none would ever take you for a native lady."

Flora's pale face flushed slightly at the compliment. It was so refreshing to find a person polite to her, after the vile insults she constantly underwent, and to hear the strains of her native tongue.

She obeyed his mute invitation: took his arm, and said, as they walked to the cottage of her father:

"Oh, how glad I am you've come! auntie is so changed since she came here, and she and poor father seem to think of nothing all the time but preaching and praying and saving these shocking creatures, no matter what becomes of me. One would think none had any soul to save but these horrid wretches."

Jack pressed her arm.

"That's natural in them. They only see from one point of view, and are apt to get into a morbid state. I must try to rouse your father up. It will be a change for him."

They approached the cottage and Flora felt a thrill of thankfulness when she heard no more shouting up-stairs, as when she had gone away.

Miss Mehitable Hoyt had returned to her chair, and Mr. Hastings was standing in the porch of the house, reading his Bible.

Neither noticed the pair until they were close by, when the old maid looked up to say:

"Well, Flora?"

She spoke severely, and then remarked the girl's companion and saw Jack's face.

For a moment she did not recognize him in his altered dress, then she broke out:

"Why, who—who is it? I seem to know—"

"Jack Ely, madam. I've come to pay you a visit. That's all," said Jack smilingly.

The old maid colored up.

"Why, it is Mr. Ely; and what are you doing here? I'm glad to see you."

The influence of old habits caused her to speak, and drove the fanaticism out of her head for a while, in the effort to be polite.

She rose and shook hands with Jack; then called up her brother and introduced "Mr. Ely, a gentleman who came over with us in the Golden Gate."

The missionary looked at Jack from head to foot in the earnest way that had grown on him from long brooding on a single subject.

"Young man," he said, "you are welcome to the vineyard of the Lord. Have you yet experienced religion?"

Jack colored deeply. He was not used to this style of questioning and answered hurriedly:

"I hope so, sir. I am very glad to see you."

Hastings bowed slightly.

"I seldom see men of my own race. I am devoted to my work here. Precious souls to be saved, sir, precious souls. You come from Yokohama, I presume."

"Yes, sir, on a visit to the prince."

Hastings interrupted unceremoniously.

"To Prince Kurosama?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you know his son, that precious brand snatched from the burning?" asked Hastings eagerly.

"Oh, sir, tell me, do you know him?"

Jack smiled.

"We were chums at Yale College for four years, and he and his father have actually adopted me, somewhat against my will, to make a Jap out of me."

Hastings broke out into ejaculations:

"Praise the Lord oh my soul! Hallelujah! The day of the Lord is at hand! Oh, sir, tell me, that young man, that precious youth, did he not turn to the truth when in our own country? Did he not?"

"You mean is he a Christian?"

"Yes, yes. He must be, he must! But you know him well, you say."

"Pretty well, sir."

"And has he not come back a Christian, to instruct others in our blessed faith?"

Jack smiled slightly.

"He studied everything he could get hold of, Mr. Hastings. But I must confess, Meeto is a little more of a heathen than when he started, and he hates missionaries."

Hastings's countenance fell.

"Is it possible? But perhaps he conceals the truth for fear of persecution. At least he is open to conviction."

Jack laughed.

"Oh yes, we've argued a hundred times, but I couldn't beat him. You see the facts were against me in the talk."

Hastings looked shocked.

"Young man! What facts?"

"Well one, for instance. He says that all the Buddhists stick together and tolerate other religions, but that the Christians fight each other and only unite in hating all the rest of the world. But of course, sir, I don't argue like you can. How long do you intend to stay here, Mr. Hastings?"

Hastings scowled deeply as if he resented the question.

"As long as my Master has work to do."

Jack shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, do you know, if I were you, I wouldn't stay here. You can do ever so much better in the new chapel at Yokohama. They want ministers there: want them badly."

Hastings looked interested.

"Excuse me, sir, but I never see any European papers. I am all alone here. Is it possible the Government has allowed us the erection of a place of worship in Yokohama?"

"Certainly, for our own people. The natives don't come to any great extent, for the service is in English; but I've seen Government officers in the pews listening attentively. They do it to study our language better."

Hastings sighed deeply.

"Even so, let us hope some grain may fall on good ground. Sister Mehitable, prepare the noonday meal. This gentleman will eat with us, I hope."

Jack bowed.

"With pleasure."

Then the ladies went away, and Hastings said to him slowly:

"Your name, if I heard aright, is Ely."

"Yes, sir," said Jack, somewhat embarrassed.

"Are you any relative to Abijah Ely?" asked the missionary, with a certain painful drop of the corners of his mouth that told of long suffering.

Jack answered in a low tone:

"His nephew, sir. Spare yourself any thing on the subject. My uncle told me the story of one who caused both of you great pain."

Hastings bowed his head.

"That is past. It was a chastisement for a poor worm like myself, that was deserved. I should have known I had no right to marry. A laborer in the Lord's vineyard should have no incumbrances and the Lord set me free through the furnace of tribulation. But, sir, I have a favor to ask of you."

"Name it," said Jack, heartily. "It shall be done if it lies in my power."

Hastings seemed to be struggling with himself for a few moments before he said:

"Sir, I have, I fear, made another grave error of late. I was foolish enough to accede to the request of my child to allow her to come out to me. I fondly hoped to find in her, as I once found in my sister Mehitable, a zealous co-worker in the vineyard. I find, too late, that the poor child is not fitted for the task. Like her mother, she goes delicately and shrinks from the peril of the way. Sir, the favor I would ask is, that you will endeavor to persuade her to return to her own land with her aunt."

Jack nodded vehemently.

"Why, certainly, my dear sir. Miss Hastings is, I know, completely disgusted with this country, and has already asked me to induce you to take her away."

The missionary looked sorrowful.

"Just as I feared. But this is not my wish. I must stay. I am a soldier of the cross, and may not desert my post. No, sir, she must go

and I must stay. Moreover, there is peril in her staying. A young *daimio*—"

"Tokichiro, you mean?" interrupted Jack.

Hastings looked surprised.

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"He was introduced to me at the levee, with the other vassals. He's an ignorant, conceited young idiot, and I gave him a lesson to-day. He shall not harm Miss Hastings. But, sir, let me persuade you to take my advice."

"In what?" asked Hastings coldly.

"In this. Prince Kurosama does not like you, and his son says openly he is sorry you were not killed in 1863. Both would speed your departure with presents, but I fear that, if you continue in your present course, trouble will ensue very soon."

Hastings looked obstinate.

"What course do you allude to? Preaching the gospel? If so, I am willing to suffer."

"Nothing of the sort. But it appears that you are in the habit of ridiculing the national religion; and Prince Kurosama made to me an especial exception to my powers. I can do as I please save in one thing. I must not try to overthrow Buddhism, or permit others to do so."

Mr. Hastings frowned with all the earnest anger of a bigoted man.

"Must I not preach what I believe to be the truth, and tell them of the falsity of their vile idolatry? Are you not a Christian?"

"Certainly I am, and one of the first precepts of my religion is the Golden Rule. How would you like some one to make fun of your religion every day, Mr. Hastings, as Voltaire did?"

Hastings hesitated a moment.

"I would answer him and refute his impudence."

"But all the same you would not like it. You would think him a rude, blasphemous person."

"Certainly. I would pray for him to be converted, and escape the burning."

"Exactly. Well, that's just what they think of you, sir, if you'll excuse me. They call you a vulgar blasphemer. They are not convinced, but only irritated by you. I myself shall not have power to save you, if you persist in this line of talk to the natives. Remember, it is to them high treason."

"High treason to whom?"

"To the mikado, whom they call the Son of Heaven. As the prince says, if his religion is false, the people will rebel at once, and that cannot be allowed."

Hastings seemed to be struck by his words.

"There is something in what you say. I will be more cautious in future."

Jack saw from his face that the concession was made grudgingly, so he turned the conversation by saying:

"You have been quite a long time in Japan, Mr. Hastings, I hear."

"Thirty years, sir," replied the other stiffly.

"You must know a great deal of their manners and customs."

Hastings nodded carelessly.

"Yes, I suppose so. I have been here so long that I notice them little."

"And you must have known the old prince a long time. Do you know anything of his character, sir?"

The missionary hesitated a little.

"I don't wish to be unjust, Mr. Ely. The prince, for a heathen and a despot, is a good and kind man. He means well, and has for many years refused to have me killed. In the trouble of 1863 he hid me in his castle, and I had hopes of converting him; but that is all past and gone now. Yes, he is a good man for a heathen."

"Can you tell me," said Jack in a low voice, "anything about this Old Double Sword, the man he has in his service? It is *nayboon* to the Japanese, and none will tell me."

Mr. Hastings looked at him fixedly.

"Double Sword? I cannot of my own knowledge; but I know what I have heard."

"And what is that?"

"That he is one of the most virulent of Christian-baters, and has killed many and many a man of our nation."

"But Jackson, interpreter of our legation, tells me he is a foreigner. Have you ever seen him?"

Hastings shook his head.

"Never, save afar. I have no taste for these men of blood. You know that the prince practices piracy for a profession, do you not?"

Jack looked incredulous.

"Piracy? I thought he protected the pilots and fought the pirates."

Hastings tossed his head mournfully.

"Alas, sir, they are all alike men of blood. I take no interest in them. *Here* is my heart. You must come and see my little flock on the Sabbath day. It is truly interesting. Thirty souls redeemed from hell fire."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ABDUCTION.

THAT evening Jack Ely and his friend Meeto sat in the shade of one of the *pagodas* on the castle wall, watching the sun set over the sea toward China, when Meeto said:

"My friend, do you know it will not be wise for this missionary to irritate people much more. I wish to protect him, for the sake of the knowledge he undoubtedly possesses, but he must be content to teach what we want to know, not what we don't care to learn."

"Why, what's the matter now?" asked Jack.

"Tokichiro Kama was in here to-day to complain that this man ridicules the prayer-mills, and says the gods are but stocks and stones. He says that if we don't send the man away he cannot answer for his *samurai*. They may butcher the priest."

Jack smiled rather scornfully.

"So he has been complaining. Did he tell you he met me this morning, and that I beat him?"

Meeto stared at him.

"No. How was that?"

"He used some insulting words about Miss Flora Hastings. You remember her?"

"Yes, a young lady most estimable," said Meeto, coldly. "Can it be she is anything to this miserable scoundrel of a missionary?"

Jack frowned deeply as he answered;

"Only his daughter. Upon my word, Meeto, I don't see why you call him a scoundrel."

"I call him that because he is always in trouble with our priests. Why cannot he let the poor people enjoy their religion in peace and quietness? I like the book of your religion. It is good. Your great Buddha, Jesus, did speak wonders. But these missionaries do talk things that are not of common-sense. They are scoundrels. It is a pity the lady is his daughter. I was inclined to like her."

"I'm just as glad you don't, old fellow, for I like her myself," returned Jack, smiling. "But the reason I spoke of her was this: your friend Tokichiro has the impudence to go to her father to-day, and offer to buy this refined, delicate lady for a thousand *kokas* of rice. What do you think of that?"

Meeto gravely shifted his pipe to puff some smoke.

"I think he must have been very fond of her," said the young Japanese, quietly. "That is a large price for a girl, with nothing but her face."

"Fond or not," returned Jack, hotly, "I gave him a piece of my mind when he told me!"

Meeto looked at his friend curiously.

"Indeed? You seem angry?"

"Angry? Of course I am! The great lubberly son of a sea cook, to think of taking a pure, delicate lady like that to his confounded harem! By George, Meeto, I told him I'd kill him if he ventured to think of such a thing."

Meeto raised his eyebrows.

"So much noise about a woman? My dear friend, excuse me, but some customs of your people do surprise me yet. Tokichiro means no harm. He wants her badly, that is all."

"Then want can be his master!" returned Jack, shortly. "He wanted to draw his sword on me—"

Meeto started violently, and his brow grew as dark as night as he ejaculated:

"On you? He dared?"

"No, no!" interrupted Jack. "He didn't dare—not a bit of it. I shook my finger at him, and he wilted. But when he told me that if the prince's robe did not cover me, he would make me see stars, why then—What would you have done, Meeto?"

Meeto frowned, as he answered:

"I should have drawn my sword, and cut him in half at the waist!"

"Well, I didn't. I told him to take care of his head, and I knocked his sword flying."

Meeto smiled as one well pleased.

"That was worthy of my brother. I could not have been so merciful, but we admire the mercy which comes of scorn. And what said he?"

"He went away growling, and shook his fist at me when he thought he was safe. That's why he came and complained of Hastings. The poor man has never done anybody any harm."

Meeto nodded thoughtfully.

"That may very well be; but Tokichiro may do harm to these poor people. They are not in the castle, and it is easy to get up a party of *ronins* in this country to do anything desperate. I think we should send for them, by all means."

"Send for whom?"

"The missionary and his family. Tokichiro has the reputation of being friends with more than one band of robbers in the neighborhood."

"Robbers?" echoed Jack. "Do you have them here under your very noses?"

Meeto smiled placidly.

"What would you have? Some of our customs surprise you, I see; but they have come down from former times. Our people are fond of fighting, and the mikado's edicts are sometimes too severe. Why, at times, he has even forbid the blood revenge. You know that if any man is murdered, it is the duty of the next of kin to hunt up the murderer and slay him at once. Well, the mikado has lately forbidden that. We are no more allowed it, but have to wait for the officers of the law."

"Well, that's civilized."

"It is not our old custom, my friend. Well, you see such laws cause a good deal of dissatisfaction; but we cannot grumble against the mikado without being liable to death. So the grumblers have to turn *ronins*, or robbers, and defy us all. That is why we do not hunt our robbers as you do. We sympathize with them."

"Hem! I can't say much, Meeto, when I think of lynch law. But what do you fear of Tokichiro, my friend?"

"That he may get a band of *ronins* to help him, and carry off the girl by force," said Meeto, coolly. "It is often done, and they make good wives after they have got over grumbling."

Jack flushed deeply, and ground his teeth.

"Confound him! if he tries on such a thing I'll cut him into a dozen pieces."

Meeto smiled tranquilly.

"If you can catch him. He will throw off his allegiance and flee to the mountains, if he dares carry off the girl."

Jack started up and looked at the sun, now nearly hidden in the sea.

"He shall not do it if I can help it. Let us send for them at once to the castle."

"Not so fast, my friend. We are not sure that Tokichiro will do any such thing. He is too rich and comfortable. He would have to give up everything in the world and turn robber for that purpose. Let us go slowly. I have not yet seen this Hastings. Let us take a little walk this evening. I do not think there will be any danger yet."

Jack, fuming with anxiety, was yet obliged to submit to his friend, who seemed provokingly cool over Flora's danger.

To the Japanese, who looked upon women as inferior beings, it was impossible to realize the anxiety of his friend, as he thought of the possible fate of Flora Hastings in the hands of Tokichiro's *samurai*.

Finally Meeto was ready to go, had put on his clogs, taken his sword, and put a pair of revolvers in his belt; for the young Japanese was an excellent shot, like most of his countrymen, who used to be celebrated for their archery.

"We'll take no one with us," said Meeto, who seemed to be purposely delaying in order that it might get dark. "The fact is, my dear friend, this expedition must be kept secret from my father, unless it cannot be avoided, and we have to call for help."

"Why?" asked Jack impatiently.

"Because it is only a missionary," said his friend coolly. "A foreigner, now, is not the same. He has a government to look after him, but these missionaries are only permitted to stay on condition that their governments have no right to demand any reparation for their deaths. They stay at their own risk. My father might forbid us to go if we asked permission, and we cannot disobey."

Jack offered no further objection to the plan, and as soon as it was fairly dark, the two young men stole out of the postern gate at the back of the castle, and went down toward the house of the missionary.

At the summer-house they paused, and Meeto looked out over the water.

"Look!" he said in a low tone. "I am not so sure but that Tokichiro is plucking up courage to strike."

Jack did not understand him at first.

"Why?" he asked. "What do you see?"

Meeto Kurosama pointed out over the water to where the "Guardian of Pilots" lay surrounded by smaller craft.

One of these had a sail up, though she still lay at anchor under the stern of the big junk.

"That's Tokichiro's junk," said Meeto. "She is called the 'Green Dragon,' and is the swiftest vessel in the fleet. I would not be surprised but he thinks of joining Satsuma instead of taking to the mountains."

"What makes you think so?" asked Jack in an anxious tone.

Meeto was about to answer, when the brown sail they had seen glided away past the "Guardian," as if she had just lifted her cable, and almost at the same moment came the sound of a woman's shriek and a scuffle in the missionary's house.

"They're at it now," cried Jack, and he drew a pistol and started toward the house at a run, when Meeto caught up with him, saying earnestly:

"The sword! the sword! It makes less noise. You and I are worth a dozen."

Jack nodded, stuck his pistol back and drew his sword as he ran on.

After the first scream the noise of scuffling increased, and as the two young men dashed up to the cottage they heard a voice cry in gasping accents:

"Lord help us! Ah!"

Then came the sound of a blow and fall, the trampling of feet, and then another scream instantly stifled.

Jack rushed into the house, saw nothing, nearly fell over a man's body, and then ran out on the opposite side of the house, to see a dark group of men hurrying off, with the outline of a *norimon* in the midst of them.

He rushed forward, shouting:

"Halt! sons of dogs! Where do you go?"

Instantly the dark group parted, and he heard a voice cry:

"Cut the fool in two! Stop his noise!"

Instantly nearly a dozen men, big, lusty fellows, came dashing back at a run with drawn swords, and attacked him with a force and desperation that sent him to every trick he had ever known to escape being cut into mince-meat.

Fight as he might, he had to leap back and retreat, hardly able to guard his head from a set of men who cut harder than any one he had ever felt before.

No one said a word, and the clashing of swords was the only sound, while Meeto Kurosama seemed to have disappeared.

For a minute and a half Jack defended himself desperately, the ferocity of his foes increasing all the time, and then he made a leap back into the doorway of the house, and fairly fled for his life, pursued by six men, who seemed to be bent on executing the sanguinary order to "cut him in two."

The instinct of life-saving lent him wings, and he fled down the valley and rushed into the fishing village through a thicket in which his opponents suddenly deserted him.

He came to his senses, breathless, on the beach, completely demoralized for the first time in his life at the ferocity of his foes; then the thought of Flora stung him into shame and new desperation, and he drew both pistols and ran back through the thicket up the valley.

His foeman had vanished, the missionary's house lay dark and silent before him, and he ran through the house again, to find his enemies gone, and no trace of Meeto.

Then for the first time the young man began to realize the nature of his feelings toward Flora, and he sunk on his knees groaning:

"My God, she's gone, she's gone!"

The words seemed to stir him into new life, for he sprang up, muttering:

"And I let them take her, and fled like a coward. After her or die!"

He ran on, with both pistols cocked, and surmounted the opposite ridge in time to see the dark group of men, nearly a quarter of a mile off, with torches round the litter, hurrying on.

Away he went over a white road that seemed to be often traveled, and very soon came to the body of a man, lying out in the road groaning:

"Who are you?" he asked in Japanese.

A strange voice answered:

"Matabei Kama. I've got a bad hurt, but it serves me right."

"Who gave it to you?" asked Jack.

"My lord Meeto Kurosama," was the faint reply. "Leave me alone to die."

Jack staid no further but ran on. If Meeto had wounded this man, Meeto had shamed the Caucasian race, and Ely hurried forward, till he began to see the figures of the men with the torches, when a man suddenly dashed out of the thicket by the roadside and Meeto's voice said hurriedly:

"No further. They are too strong for us. We must follow and take them one by one, or we are lost. Did they hurt you?"

"No," answered Jack, confusedly. "I'm ashamed I had to run for it."

"So did I," answered Meeto, "they are *ronins* of Double Sword's band, regular devils. We must be cautious."

"Double Sword's band," echoed Jack amazed. "I thought he obeyed you?"

"So he does. I'll tell you another time," was the hurried reply as they ran on. "He's not with them. It's Tokichiro, as I thought, and he has taken the girl and killed the old man."

"How do you know?" asked Jack, panting.

"Matabei Kama told me. He knew me," was the reply. "Slacken up. Not too near."

They slackened to a walk, and saw the men ahead halt, when a voice cried:

"Where's Matabei Kama?"

"Not here!" cried several voices.

"Send back three men to look for him," said the first voice. "Kill all you meet. We cannot afford to be followed to-night."

Meeto pressed Jack's arm and they glided into a thicket by the roadside.

The men with torches set off again at a walk, and three *samurai* came back to look along the road for the missing Matabei.

As they passed by, Meeto whispered:

"Let them go. They'll find the body and come after us. We must kill every one or be killed. Do you fear yet?"

Ely shook his head.

"Not now, but a dozen to one was too much."

They waited until the three men were out of sight, when they rose up to follow the litter.

They had not gone half a mile when they heard the men running back, cursing as they came, and panting with their exertions.

"We must take them while they are tired," whispered Meeto, and both young men glided into cover by the roadside.

Presently the men came trotting by and Meeto let them pass a few feet.

Then, with a silent rush on bare feet, for they had left their clogs behind them, the two young

men precipitated themselves on their foes, taking them in rear unheeded.

One vicious cut of the razor-like Japanese swords, and two men fell dead, nearly decapitated. The third, with a startled shout, turned to flight, but was run through the body by Jack, while he was parrying a head-cut of Meeto's sword, and fell dead with a shriek of pain.

"We have done what we wanted," said Meeto coolly. "Now let us follow those rascals and see where they're going. They'll take us for their own men at night."

They put on their clogs and trotted on for a mile more, when they came so close to the procession that some one called out:

"Well, did you find Matabei?"

"Ay, ay," returned Meeto in gruff tones. "He is coming on with Kuroske. They're tired out. Don't go so fast."

Then he whispered to Jack:

"Let us drop back a little. If they find us out, we must run."

"Why not draw our pistols and charge?" asked Jack recklessly. "The surprise must succeed."

"Because those men are *ronins* of Double Sword, I tell you," returned Meeto. "They have pistols as well as we, and you'll find out that. No, we have no hope save one, when daylight comes, if then."

"And what is that?" asked Jack.

"To meet Double Sword," was the reply. "These men belong to him, but he is not with them."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PURSUIT.

As for Flora Hastings, how fared it with her all this time?

She had seen Jack Ely come to her father's house, though she did not know the subject of their private conversation, and she had felt as if civilization were coming back to her in the midst of barbarism, when she heard the English tongue again, saw Jack sitting down to dinner with them, and heard him say, as he went away, that "he would come again soon."

She was light-hearted as a bird all day, and when the darkness came had forgotten all about Tokichiro Kama.

The lanterns had been lighted for the night, and she was talking to her aunt about home in America, when they heard a slight noise on the veranda.

The next moment the room was filled with savage-looking armed men, headed by Tokichiro, and she uttered a shriek of alarm and sprung up.

"Silence!" growled Tokichiro, and in a moment he had thrown a cloth over her head, and she felt herself seized in his arms.

Struggling frantically, she tried to scream, heard the sound of scuffling, panting, and a heavy blow, when her father's groan met her ears, and he cried:

"Lord help us! Ah!"

Then her senses seemed to leave her, and when she recovered she found herself mutilated in a cloth, tied hand and foot, and lying in a dark box, which she knew to be a *norimon* from the swinging motion with which it was borne along. She managed to get her head out to scream once more, when a rude hand dashed aside the curtains of the *norimon*, and she was seized by the throat and choked into silence by Tokichiro himself who said:

"You would not come willingly. Now I've got you and I'll whip you to death if you make a noise. Be quiet!"

The brute meant what he said and the poor girl knew it. There seemed to be no sort of chivalry in Tokichiro's wooing. He choked her till she fainted again; and when she came to, once more, she lay still for very fear, and felt herself borne along.

But while she no longer dared scream, her determination not to submit quietly became stronger and she made up her mind to survey her position and find if there was any chance to escape.

She had to rely on herself, for she was all alone in the *norimon*, but the curtains had fallen again and that was some little advantage, as it left her free to act.

She was tied hand and foot, but she felt that her bonds had been hastily and carelessly arranged, and very soon managed to untie herself and look round her.

The litter was large and roomy, and she lay on soft cushions.

Outside she heard the low buzz of talk and the steps of men in clogs clattering along the road.

Cautiously parting the curtains with one finger, she peeped out and counted nearly twenty men round her, all armed with swords, but all with strange faces, save one.

Tokichiro Kama was riding on a sorry nag outside the group of his followers, and she saw she was in a wild sort of place, among rocks and woods, with no view on any side possible for trees.

Presently she heard Tokichiro say:

"Stop! Some one is following us!"

Instantly the *norimon* stopped and the men stood listening.

"Put out the torches!" said Tokichiro, and he was instantly obeyed, when thick darkness settled down on the scene.

There was a silent pause and the young *saimio* continued, in a low voice:

"Some one is following us. It is singular that Matabei and the rest have not come back. Call those men behind."

Flora heard one of the *samurai* call out:

"Ho, Matabei, Kuroske, Yamegata! Why don't you come on?"

There was no answer, and one of the men said in a low voice:

"They're not there. I thought something was wrong in that man's voice. He must be an enemy."

Tokichiro answered irritably:

"You hold your tongue, Mata. Four of you go back and find what's the matter. If those men are strangers, kill them!"

Flora saw four figures glide off into the darkness, with a silence that showed they had left their clogs behind them, and she parted the curtains to peep out on the other side of the litter.

She saw only two men there, and both had their backs to her, looking down the road after the rest of the party.

Very softly she gathered herself up for a spring, but waited for a better time, when Tokichiro said excitedly:

"What's that noise?"

It was the sound of a scuffle and a groan, far away in the darkness, and the young *saimio* cried out:

"Two of you guard the litter. Follow me the rest."

Then away went all her guards down the road, running hard, Tokichiro at the head, and very soon after came the sounds of a struggle, the clashing of swords, pistol-shots, ferocious curses in Japanese, till her two guards seemed to lose control over themselves, and one growled:

"Let us go down. 'Tis a fight."

"Let us kill the woman first," said the other coolly. "Then Tokichiro Kama can't say we let her run away."

Flora heard the threat, and, without thinking of anything else, made her spring from the litter which had been set down on the ground, and fled up the road as fast as she could go.

True, her Japanese robe was by no means fitted for running, but she made shift to gather it up as she ran, and her bare feet made no noise on the road.

The men watching the fight did not even notice her departure at first, so loud was the noise of the struggle, and so silently did she slip out on the opposite side.

She was a good hundred feet away before she heard the startled cry:

"The woman! the woman! She's gone!"

Then she darted to the side of the road, knowing that the darkness must cover her from view, felt the trunk of a huge tree there, and threw herself down behind it, panting with excitement.

She heard the fighting going on, and heard also her two guardians calling to each other as they hunted up and down the road and through the bushes, frequently passing within a few feet of where she lay crouched between the roots of the big tree, hardly daring to breathe.

The noise of the contest gradually died away and at last ceased entirely, when the girl heard Tokichiro inquire harshly as he came back:

"What's this? Where are Yarosaka and his brother? Hallo!"

She knew then that he had discovered the empty *norimon*. As for her guards, as soon as they heard his voice they ceased to call to each other, and Flora judged they were hiding for fear of the *saimio's* vengeance.

There was a great deal of hubbub around the empty litter, and at last Tokichiro cried:

"Light the torches and we will search. She can't be far off yet."

Flora quaked, for he was right. She was not two hundred feet from the speaker.

Silently she rose from her lair and stole off into the body of the wood, hoping to escape before the torches were lighted, but the very effort drove her into new dangers.

She had not gone three steps, when she heard a rustle, and a voice whispered:

"I told you so. There she is."

The voice brought her to a halt, and a red glare illuminated the dark wood at the same moment.

Then came a rush and a scuffle, and her two guardians had seized her, shouting:

"Here she is, Tokichiro Kama! Shall we kill her for trying to run away?"

The torches had been lighted when Tokichiro called back:

"No, no, don't harm her. She is to be my wife as soon as she comes to her senses. Bring her here at once."

And the poor girl was dragged down to the *norimon*, where Tokichiro greeted her with the sneering remark:

"Well, you had a fine friend, it seems, in that foreigner who came after us. He is a cunning man, but not cunning enough for us. We have killed him."

Flora felt faint and hopeless. She knew whom he meant well enough. She had seen Jack Ely in the morning quarrel with the young Japanese, and judged that he could be the only one who would have dared to follow up her abductors in the desperate way she had witnessed.

"Yes," continued Tokichiro triumphantly. "He is dead, and there is none to save you, daughter of a dead dog. I meant to make you my wife; now you shall be my slave. Get into the *norimon* quick."

She obeyed, more dead than alive, and the litter was carried on through the darkness, hour after hour, Flora lying on the cushions in a dull stupor of misery.

Her father had been killed, she felt sure, and her aunt must have shared his fate. Now the only friend she had in the world had been slaughtered too, and she felt as if she wished she could die herself.

Had she had a weapon, it is possible she might have attempted her own life, so utter was her hopeless misery, but as it was, she had made up her mind to provoke her guards to kill her, as soon as she got a chance.

In this way the night passed and morning dawned between the curtains of the litter, when she looked out and saw that they had come to the sea-shore, and were descending a steep rocky path to the end of a small, land-locked bay.

In the midst of the bay lay a junk at anchor, and a boat was waiting on the shore, with two men standing by it.

Her captors bore her to the boat, and a rough voice said, as the litter was set down:

"Get out, daughter of a dead dog."

Her only consolation for the rudeness of the speech lay in the fact that it was not the voice of Tokichiro, and when she left the litter the young *saimio* was not to be seen, though she looked round for him:

One of the *samurai* laughed as he saw her glance round and said:

"No, no, pretty bird, Tokichiro is not here, but you'll see him soon enough. Get into the boat, and we will row you to your nest."

The man's voice was not so rough as the others; but there was an evil leer in his eye that frightened her still more, and it was in the desperate hope of softening her enemies that she clasped her hands and said:

"Oh, *samurai*, men of the sword, what has a poor girl done, that you should treat her in this way? You have had mothers. Would you like any one to treat your mother so?"

Her appeal was met by a laugh, and one of the men answered:

"No one wants to hurt you, pretty bird; but the lord's orders must be obeyed. Get into the boat at once."

"Who is your lord?" asked Flora to gain a little time. "Surely Prince Kurosama will punish this, if he hears of it."

"Silence, daughter of a dead dog," said the man, sourly. "We owe nothing to Kurosama. We are Satsuma men, and this is Satsuma territory. Get into the boat."

Flora's heart sunk as she entered the boat and was rowed away to the junk. Arrived on board, she was received by a huge, ferocious looking fellow, who said as he pointed to the cabin:

"There. Go in there and wait till the lord comes. It is too good for a Christian, but those are the orders."

Glad of any respite from the savage rudeness of the men, however short, Flora entered the cabin of the junk and found a scene of luxury that showed that it belonged to a rich man.

Beside the cabin of the Guardian it might have looked mean; but to Flora the rich bronzes and vases, the silk cushions, the paintings and trophies were beautiful, even in her terrified condition; and the cabin had the great advantage, to her, of being empty of human beings.

She shut the door, no one objecting, and knew almost immediately from the shouts and tramping of feet, that the junk was getting under way.

Flora surveyed her prison and her eye lighted up when she saw the trophies of weapons, for it gave her a chance to take care of herself.

She quickly secreted a short Japanese dagger in her bosom, saying to herself:

"At least, if the wretches come, I can follow one of their customs and kill myself; but not till I have killed him."

The dagger hidden, she felt calmer and began to examine the cabin, which was full of beautiful furniture.

In one corner, among the arms, she saw an American revolver with the Hartford mark on it, but it was not loaded, so she let it alone.

Soon after, the motion of the vessel showed it was under way, and the girl looked out of the stern windows and saw that the bay was receding from view, while the waves indicated that rough weather prevailed outside.

She looked out of window after window, and finally went to the cabin door, which commanded a view of the deck.

The junk was full of armed men, stretching out to sea; a stiff breeze was blowing, and sails dotted the surface of the sparkling water in all directions.

No one noticed her, though she half-opened the door, but she heard them talking to each other, and made out from what she understood that they were looking for some other vessel that was to meet them.

"Tokichiro Kama will make a good man after he has been broken in," said one. "He's as strong as a horse, but clumsy as a calf. Did you see the way that stranger sent him flying?"

Flora listened intently to hear the other say: "That stranger is a wonder. But we could have killed him if it had been daylight."

"I wonder who he was?" said the first. "Tokichiro knows, and that's why he went off in the night."

"Perhaps he does. For my part, Yokomaga, I've no lord to crouch to, now, and I don't care if it was Kurosama's self."

"Hush! hush! Kurosama is a great man and pays well."

"I know it, but we owe him nothing, unless he pays us. Satsuma will take us any time and be glad of the chance. Old Double Sword can laugh at them all."

Flora's heart sunk within her. Of all Japanese she had been taught to fear Old Double Sword as a merciless Christian-hater and robber. Could these men be his? If so her fate was indeed settled against her.

While thinking over this, she heard one of the men cry out excitedly:

"Yonder she comes at last. The Blue Shark is coming!"

Flora put out her head and saw the men rush to the side of the junk to gaze out to seaward, where a dark speck appeared on the horizon.

To her it was only a speck, but the men seemed to recognize it, for they shouted:

"The Blue Shark! The Blue Shark!"

She closed the door again, to peep through the crevice, and, bit by bit, the dark speck grew larger, till it assumed the form of a mat-sail of unusual size.

Finally it developed into a vast triangle of brown, crossed with bamboo slats, and swelling above the double hull of a *lorcha*, over a platform crowded with men.

Behind the men she saw rising a deck-house, and the whole structure swept over the sea with amazing rapidity, coming toward the junk.

As the *lorcha* approached, Flora anxiously scanned the decks to see if she could distinguish any face she knew, and she slipped her hand into the bosom of her robe and grasped her dagger firmly as she saw there, beside the tall figure of a gray-bearded giant, the dark face of Tokichiro Kama.

"Before he touches me, I'll kill myself," she muttered firmly; but her cheek paled and her heart beat violently as she said it.

Would she have the courage? A moment more would tell, for the *lorcha* was close to the junk.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JACK AND MEETO.

MEETO KUROKAMA and Jack Ely followed the torches of Tokichiro's party at a distance till they had quitted the high-road and come to the mountains that intersect Japan, when they saw the party halt, and Meeto said:

"Into the woods! They begin to suspect us."

They darted to cover, and heard Tokichiro order back the men to examine them.

Jack Ely drew his sword and said to Meeto: "Now mind, we must kill them dead, and we'll have a chance at the rest."

Meeto nodded.

"Keep your pistol to the last," he said. "You have the swords, so have I. Use them with both hands, and cut to kill."

They had not long to wait, for four men came down the road in the dark, and began to hunt round in the bushes.

As soon as they were close by, the two friends sprung on them from behind as before, stabbed two, and cut the third seriously before any resistance was attempted in the surprise. There was a short contest with the last man; but the fact that they had two swords apiece and cut ferociously with them, decided the battle, which did not occupy thirty seconds, all told.

Then Meeto said hurriedly:

"Here come the rest. Shoot to kill, but be ready to run! Out into the road!"

They heard the rush of trampling feet and ran into the road, where both knelt down, leveled their revolvers, and began to fire as their opponents came on.

Their fire checked the rush, but produced a counter fire, and the bullets whistled by them so sharply that they expected every moment to be their last.

Jack emptied his last barrel, still unhurt in the darkness, put back his pistols, caught up the swords lying by him, and called out to Meeto:

"Charge!"

"Charge!" replied Meeto, and the two friends rushed at their foes, despite the odds of four to one, laid savagely about them for a few strokes, and then, finding the place too hot even for them, turned and fled as hard as they could, stripping the pursuers inside of a

hundred yards, and hearing them give up the chase.

Then they trotted on more leisurely, and Meeto asked Jack:

"Did they shoot you?"

"Not to hurt; but I believe they grazed me more than once. I feel blood running down my body and legs, and one shoulder is quite sore."

"I was nearly stunned by a bullet," said Meeto, rather faintly. "The blood's all in my eyes, and I got a cut on the left arm. I fear we must give up the chase."

"I fear so too," gloomily answered Jack. "But what are we to do? We can't give everything up like that."

"I know now where they are going," was Meeto's reply. "They will be in the territory of Satsuma before morning."

"And shall we be unable to get back Flora? Good Heavens! my blood boils at the thought. Meeto, we must follow her. We must do something."

Meeto laid his hand on Jack's arm.

"Dear friend," he said in English, "I appreciate your extremity of anxious feeling, but tell me, of what good is it to us that the Prince of Kurosama should lose his son and his adopted son at the hands of robbers for no good. We cannot rescue the lady to-night."

Jack was struck by his words.

"What can we do then?"

"Leave it to me," was Meeto's answer. "We must go home first."

"Home?"

"Yes, home. Fear not, my friend. I know who those men are, and bitter will be the punishment of Tokichiro Kama for this night's work. I promise you he shall not escape. He has dared to raise his hand against the head of his clan, and my father will have him punished so that all the world will remember it."

Jack hesitated.

"But Flora? What—"

"She must take care of herself," said the young *daimio* coldly. "One of our women would not fear if an army surrounded her, so long as she had a dagger. Our people do not fear death. If she yields to disgrace you must forget her, my friend. I do not believe much in these Christian girls. But, remember that, whatever befalls her, she shall be avenged. Tokichiro Kama cannot carry off my father's slaves in peace. Come on."

Jack could not answer him. He saw as well as Meeto the uselessness of further strife, when they were only two men against eight or ten, after all their successes.

He had not the philosophy of the Japanese, so he plodded on, gloomily enough, till they saw the lights of Kurosima ahead, and in another half-hour had re-entered the castle.

Meeto went straight to the apartment of the old prince, and said to the *samurai* who guarded the door:

"Present my respectful duty to his highness and say that I request an audience on affairs concerning the honor of the clan."

Then he turned to Jack, whispering:

"Come with me and do as I do."

They were admitted, and found the old prince, stately and severe, eying them in a way that boded ill, Jack thought, to their success.

"It is a matter of moment that causes my son to disturb his father's repose?" he said interrogatively, as Meeto prostrated himself.

Jack, after a moment's hesitation, followed Meeto's example.

Meeto rose and sat down on his heels before the old prince in the Japanese posture of respect, answering:

"It is a matter of moment, great prince. A vassal has rebelled."

The old prince frowned deeply.

"A vassal rebelled? Who?"

"Tokichiro Kama. He has headed a band of *ronins*; killed your Christian slave and the old Christian woman, and stolen the girl."

Prince Kurosama sat silent a moment.

Jack could not tell how the news affected him at first, he was so impassive.

At last he said:

"And what did my son?"

"I followed him with my brother, and they raised their swords against us."

"Had you men with you?" asked the old prince quickly.

"None, my lord. We were alone. They drove us back at first. There were twenty of them, of Double Sword's band, Tokichiro at the head."

"Well?" asked the prince, seeing he paused.

"We followed them again, and they sent back four to slay us. We killed them."

The old man smiled proudly, the first token of emotion he had shown.

"Go on," he said.

"They sent back four more, and we slew them. Then came ten, and drove us back at last, but not till we had slain two, and were hurt ourselves. Then we came back to ask leave to punish the robbers. They have gone to Satsuma."

As Meeto finished he prostrated himself again and the old prince seemed to be lost in thought, for it was a good two minutes before he spoke again.

"Where is Tokichiro's vessel?" he asked.

"Gone to sea. She went, the moment that his band attacked the missionary."

Prince Kurosama frowned fretfully.

"These missionaries are fools. I saved him once before. Now comes a demand from his minister for money. I cannot help it. But Tokichiro must be punished. He has lifted his hand against my son."

He shook his head angrily.

"He must be punished. What do you wish?"

"My father's signet," answered Meeto promptly. "My brother and I can hunt him down if we have your authority."

The old prince looked proudly at his son, whose face was all covered with blood and held out his signet.

"You shall have it," he said. "Take what you wish, even to the Guardian of Pilots. Bombard Satsuma in his palace if you will, but bring back Tokichiro, unless he commits happy dispatch before his arrest."

Meeto prostrated himself a third time.

"My own head answer for it," he said.

Then he pulled Jack's sleeve and they backed out, the old prince answering their obeisance by a gracious wave of his fan.

Outside, Meeto said to Jack:

"We will go aboard at once. I have much to tell you, and we have no time to lose. If we can meet Double Sword before morning, we may save your woman."

"Why? How has that anything to do with it?" asked Jack.

"Because Tokichiro will travel all night to get into Satsuma's dominions. Then he will not dare enter them himself."

"Why not?"

"Because he is one of our vassals. Satsuma would not receive him."

"Where will he go then?"

"I do not know; but I suspect."

"What?"

"That he will flee to the sea-side, to meet Old Double Sword."

"And where is he?"

"Lying in a bay, ten miles from here."

While they were talking, they were traversing the coast, and came down to the sea-shore, where was a stone wharf belonging to the prince.

Meeto called to a man who paraded the wharf in curious armor, spear in hand:

"Call out the boatman. I wish to go out."

The man brought forward a paper lantern, and started when he saw his young chief.

"Certainly, most noble," he said, and then began to shout:

"Boat! boat! For the most noble prince, Meeto Kurosama, lord of the sea! Vassals, obey!"

They came running out of their houses by the wharf and tumbled into the barge in short order, when the two friends were rowed to the "Guardian of Pilots," and Meeto told the captain as he went on board:

"Get up sail at once. To the Bay of Sharks. We must see Double Sword."

Then he beckoned Jack into the cabin, and told him with a sigh of relief:

"We've done all we can. If we find Double Sword we are all right. But do not hope too much. He may be gone before we come. Tokichiro is a bold man, and may impose on him by a fine story. In the mean time, let us wash off this blood and make ourselves look more like sons of Kurosama."

Jack was by no means sorry to bathe and assume new clothes, for he was covered with blood and dirt; but, when he came back to the saloon, he found Meeto in a state of weakness that frightened him, and the young *daimio* told him with a faint smile:

"The last cut cost me a good deal of blood; but I've bound it up. I shall not be good to fight to-morrow, dear friend. You must do the fighting for me."

"I'll do my best, Meeto. Now, what is it you have to tell me?"

Meeto looked around cautiously.

"Close the door," he said, "and come near. Some of them understand English and might listen. You know our country is full of spies."

Jack nodded.

"That reminds me. What has become of my rascal, Takewaka?"

Meeto smiled.

"He's on board here, I'm sure."

"Why sure?"

"He was not with us to-night?"

"No."

"And he was not in the castle, or he would have claimed your notice. But you can trust him to stick close to you. They saw us on shore go to the junk. You may be sure he has followed."

Jack rose up.

"In that case we might as well know where he is. The scamp might listen."

He went to the door, opened it suddenly and pounced on Takewaka, who was crouched behind the leaf, listening with all his might.

At the sight of Jack, he groveled on the deck.

"Great sau, noble sau, I feared you would need your slave, so I was waiting till you called me."

Jack turned him to the fore-castle and sent him off with a kick, crying:

"Come here again, before I call you, and I'll cut your head off."

Takewaka slunk away and Meeto laughed.

"That fellow's paid to watch you."

"By whom?"

"By my father," said Meeto, coolly.

Jack stared.

"But why?"

"Custom of our country. Everybody spies on everybody else."

"Does any one spy on you?"

"Certainly. I cannot tell who it is, but there is some one."

"And what makes you think Takewaka is a spy on me?"

"Because I saw my father speak to him on the vessel, and a great *daimio* never speaks to a coolie without a reason."

"But why should I be spied on?"

"Because you are as yet new to our ways, and my father wishes to see if he can trust you. It is the custom of our country."

Jack became very thoughtful for a few moments over this, but finally said:

"Well, let him spy, but he'd better not let me catch him at it. Never mind him. Now tell me what you want to say. Talk French. They none of them understand that."

Meeto nodded.

"A good idea," he answered in French. "Let them listen. After all, my friend, you are one of our family now, and can respect *neyboon* as well as 'he rest. This is *neyboon*, and I can say no more unless you promise to respect it."

"I promise," said Jack, readily.

Meeto began with a glance at the door.

"We are in the midst of spies as I told you, but I am supreme lord on this vessel as long as I hold my father's signet. I hold the power of life and death as much as he does himself. Nevertheless, it is but for a time, and afterward I am as much a slave as any one. You have often expressed curiosity about Double Sword. It is time I told you."

"And who is he?" asked Jack, excitedly. "A foreigner or a Christian-hater, a pirate or not?"

Meeto drew him closer.

"Double Sword is a man of your nation, who was on the losing side in your war that we have talked of so often. He was in that ship that you hated so much."

"The Alabama?" asked Jack, breathless.

"The same."

"And his name?"

Jack had risen in his excitement, and the answer did not surprise him in the least.

"The same as yours. That is the reason I became your friend at Yale, Jack Ely."

Jack drew a long breath.

"And I never thought of it. Meeto, that man is my father's brother."

Meeto nodded.

"I know it. That is one reason why my father adopted you. Double Sword has served our family so well that he hoped to induce you to do the same. We believe in blood."

"But surely he cannot be a Christian-hater, as poor Hastings said."

Meeto shook his head.

"That is a misconception. You see he hated all your people violently at one time, and did a great deal of damage, as you know. When the ship was here in Yokohama, Double Sword learned something of our ways, liked the country, and several *daimios* were anxious to get him to enter their service. His vessel was sunk somewhere. I do not rightly know where."

"In the English channel by the Kearsarge," said Jack, proudly.

"Yes, yes. We heard of it, but we do not take particular notice of those details," said Meeto, "any more than you do of the little details of our history. It was sunk, and we heard no more of him till he came here in an English steamer, and entered my father's service. I have no idea why he did so more than any other prince; but he it was who induced my father to build that *lorcha* in the Malay fashion, on account of its swiftness, and got together his crew, which he trained in the style of your warfare and ours, taking the strong points of each."

"But what does he do for your father?" asked Jack, curiously. "That's what I don't understand."

Meeto hesitated awhile, till he said:

"You know we have old customs. One of them is that every *daimio* has control of his own coasts, and has a right to take toll of vessels passing by, if they come within a certain distance of the shore. The old law or custom was within such a distance that one can count the men on deck from the shore. Outside that line they are safe. But now comes the *neyboon* part. The *daimios*, to increase their revenues, use telescopes since the foreigners have come to sell them, and are able to count the men several miles off. This is *neyboon*, but well understood; consequently, every lord that owns a vessel goes cruising to take toll, and the traders were persecuted all along our coasts, till the mikado issued an edict that the naked eye should be the test. But this law was not obeyed, till my father offered to enforce it if

he were given the requisite authority. That is why he was appointed Protector of Pilots."

"But Double Sword—what is he?"

"My father's right hand."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VOICE OF THE VOLCANO.

"You see," continued Meeto, with a slight smile, "since I have seen the world outside of this country, I have learned a good deal, and see our absurdities in some things. It is impiety and sacrilege in us to disobey the mikado, because he is the Son of Heaven. Nevertheless, we pretend not to know anything about a certain thing, and hide our wickedness under *neyboon*. My father and Satsuma hate each other, as you doubtless know. Satsuma wishes to drive out the foreigners; my father is willing to let them stay so long as they won't teach their religion. He sees that if we collect toll at every foot of the coast we shall finally drive away all trade from our shores. Moreover, by becoming Protector of Pilots he is able to fight Satsuma without being liable to the law. The pilots have their business to keep outside the danger-line, and Double Sword cruises constantly to protect them. If a *daimio* exceeds his privilege, it is Double Sword's duty to punish him. That is why his men are such fighters and devils. With them there is no quarter. Every *daimio* is against them, and if ever the Blue Shark is captured not a man will live to tell the tale. All will be killed."

"How comes it, then," asked Jack, "that Double Sword's men have, as you say, taken poor Flora into Satsuma's dominions, if they are such outlaws?"

"Understand me, my friend. The Blue Shark as the scourge of the piratical *daimios*, is an outlaw among them; but there is not a man of them all that would not give half his revenue to engage Double Sword and his men in their service. They are all picked men, the best fighters in the empire, and Double Sword has trained them to fight as he does, with both hands. They are feared by all the *samourai*, who dare not attack them three to one. You found what they were last night, though they only used one sword apiece, being on shore and the expedition being *neyboon*."

"Then how did you know they were Double Sword's men?"

"By the way they fought. You and I can beat the ordinary *samourai* easily, but those fellows were too much for us. Face to face we could not hit one of them."

Jack mused over the story for awhile and then asked:

"But how comes it that Double Sword has allowed his men to be used in this vile abduction by Tokichiro?"

"I don't think he has. It was probably a part of his men away on leave and Tokichiro saw and hired them. They are all *ronin* who have thrown off their allegiance to their own lords and are willing to hire to any man who will pay them."

Jack flushed slightly when he thought of his uncle as the head of a virtual band of robbers selling their services for any sort of violence and he asked with some reluctance:

"And Double Sword? Does he sanction it?"

"Never at sea. On land when his men leave the Blue Shark they are free to roam where they please. They are *ronin* and subject to no law."

By this time the motion of the cabin told Jack that they were at sea and he went on deck awhile, leaving his friend on the couch below, tired out with his talk and sinking to sleep from weakness.

On deck all was quiet and peaceful, the stars spangling the heavens in clusters of glory, the sea heaving softly, a gentle breeze just filling the sails.

Jack found the captain, Yoshi Heero-saka, pacing the quarter-deck above the cabin and the grave Japanese saluted him with the formal words:

"Good fortune attend the most noble son of my lord the prince. The night is favorable, but the wind is not enough."

"Which way is Double Sword's vessel?" asked Jack looking round.

Captain Heero-saka pointed toward a light, hardly distinguishable from a star on the horizon.

"That is the beacon at the summit of the Cape of Tribulation," he said, "and behind it lies the Bay of Sharks. The Double Sword has gone into harbor there, but he will sail before daylight. We shall not be in time to catch him before he goes."

Jack bit his lips with vexation.

"Can we not signal to him in some way if we arrive too late?"

The captain shook his head.

"Not unless he sees us in daylight. At night with lanterns he would mistrust us."

"Why?"

"He would take it for a stratagem of the Satsuma pirates and keep away from us. He has no heavy guns as we have and trusts to his swiftness and to the courage of his crew to board with."

"Crack on all the sail you can then," said Jack hurriedly. "There is a scoundrel has taken a lady away from her home, and I fear he will flee to Double Sword before we can find him."

The captain looked politely surprised.

"A woman, most noble prince? Double Sword will not interfere with a woman. He allows none on his vessel. Women are like coals of fire in the rice straw. No warrior must be troubled with them till he wishes to raise up a son to carry his father's sword."

Jack turned away fretfully. It seemed to him that these Japanese barbarians had no sort of human feeling about them.

He was fuming with anger and impatience at the possible fate of Flora, and these people took it so calmly that one might think they imagined women to be mere domestic cattle, worth so much money and no more.

He went below and found Meeto fast asleep, and looking so pale that his heart smote him for not remembering what his friend had already done for him.

"He followed them up when I ran; he it was who killed their first man, and he has been hurt for my sake. For what can he be expected to care about a foreigner? I must learn to be calmer and remember where I am."

He threw himself on a couch and tried to rest a while. Insensibly the fatigue, induced by his past excitement and the soreness of his numerous superficial wounds, sent him into a doze which deepened into a profound slumber, from which he did not awake till broad daylight.

Then when he turned over, the stiffness of his limbs reminded him that he was hurt, and it was with difficulty and quite slowly that he struggled up from his couch to find himself alone in the cabin, Meeto having risen and gone on deck.

The sound of his movements, however, brought in the officious Takewaka, who insisted on taking his master to the hot bath and shampooing the stiffness out of his limbs.

Jack felt a good deal refreshed and benefited by the operation, for he had been grazed by six or eight bullets and received two light slashes from swords, making painful but not serious flesh cuts.

He went on deck, and found Meeto there looking toward the land.

They were about three miles from a lofty and precipitous cape, on which stood a light-house of modern construction—a legacy from foreign engineers—and Meeto was talking to Captain Heero-saka very earnestly.

As Jack approached, his friend said:

"I fear we are too late. It sunk to a calm after midnight, and the breeze has only just come. The Blue Shark lay behind that cape last night, but Heero-saka says she is gone."

"How can he tell?" asked Jack. "She may be there yet, out of sight. Why not fire a gun and find out?"

Captain Heero-saka shrugged his shoulders.

"As my lord pleases, but she is not there. The signal is flying from the tower."

"What signal?"

"To warn the pilots that Double Sword is at sea, and that they must keep outside the line until they see him. But I will fire a gun. If he is there he will answer."

One of the long bronze cannon was loaded and fired with a thundering report, that echoed from the face of the cliff with wonderful distinctness; but when the reverberations died away, they listened in vain for an answering report from Double Sword.

"He has gone in the night," said Meeto slowly, "and now we have but one thing to do."

"And what is that?"

"Sail to Kagosima and demand justice of Satsuma. He will not allow his territory to be used for our runaway vassals since his open reconciliation with my father. Steer for Kagosima, Captain Heero-saka."

Then he turned away to the cabin and said to Jack, who had followed him:

"It is a bad job, I fear; but it is no use to fret over it. We shall find him at last, and when we do we shall have our revenge."

Jack looked very gloomy.

"Revenge? Yes. But she, poor girl, what will become of her?"

"If harm is done to her, my friend, I promise that Tokichiro shall be punished as never man was punished before," said Meeto earnestly. "I see that you love the lady, and I assure you that we Japanese are not insensible to the passion of love. She shall be richly revenged, I promise it."

Then, changing his tone to one of gayety, he went on:

"But come, it is useless to despair. Warriors are not women to weep. We are both weak and need strength. Let us eat and try to forget our sorrows for awhile."

He called for breakfast and Jack was surprised to find that Meeto was not the only person who had a good appetite.

Loss of blood and hunger had sharpened his own appetite and he found himself eating almost voraciously and much benefited by the meal in body and mind.

Everything assumed a more cheerful aspect, and he felt much stronger, and better able to bear what was to come.

Indeed, he was almost surprised at his own cheerfulness when he went up on deck again and found the junk plowing through the waters to the eastward, having passed the Bay of Sharks, which was, as Heero-saka had predicted, empty save for a few small fishing-boats and skiffs.

"Where are we going?" he asked Meeto.

"To Kagosima," was the reply, with a certain compression of the lips that told the young Japanese was by no means easy in mind. "My father told me to bombard the prince in his palace, if need be, but to bring back Tokichiro alive, unless he committed happy dispatch. That is my duty and I shall do it."

Jack said nothing; but from that time he complained no more to himself of the cold insensibility of his friend.

Meeto might be cold in his manner, but there was no doubt of one thing. He was running into frightful peril to oblige his friend, and doing it with a calmness that indicated full knowledge of the consequences.

He paced the deck with the cold, dignified aspect that Jack had noticed on so many high-caste nobles, impassive to emotion, but quick to observe everything; and nothing more was said till the sun had risen high in heaven and the breeze, which had been so boisterous at sunrise, began to die away with the heat till it fell into a dead calm.

Jack, of course, began to fume and fret at this, but his friend checked him.

"The gods rule the winds," he said, "and it is displeasing to them to complain. We will dine and smoke our pipes. Peradventure the declining sun will bring wind, and Kagosima is not six hours' sail from here, with a fair breeze."

So they dined and smoked, and waited for the breeze; but all in vain.

On the contrary, as the afternoon advanced it grew hotter and hotter, while a thin dusky haze overspread the sun, no clouds being visible.

The sea, which had fallen to a calm, also began to roll into long, oily swells, that tossed the big junk to and fro, like a cork, threatening to roll her masts out of her, and Captain Heero-saka ordered the sails to be lowered, as they were useless in the calm.

Jack could not help being uneasy at the look of the weather, though he was no sailor, but he saw that his friend and the captain were quite calm, and seemed to look on the strange phenomena around them as being quite commonplace.

Finally he asked Heero-saka:

"Is there not a typhoon coming?"

The Japanese shook his head, and pointed inland, saying quietly:

"Fusuyama is complaining; that is all. The storm will come after it is over."

Jack looked in the direction indicated, but saw nothing save the indistinct outlines of the rocky coast, softened by the haze, which seemed to gather over it more thickly than over the ocean.

As he looked more attentively, it seemed to him that the haze was very dark in color, and he said to Meeto:

"It looks more like smoke than fog."

"It is smoke," replied his friend quietly.

"Do you not know this country is full of volcanoes. Fusuyama is complaining; that is all."

He seemed as unconcerned when speaking of the volcano, as if it were nothing of importance.

Yet the weather was getting hotter all the time, the murky haze thicker, and even the native sailors, used as they were to the climate, were panting with the heat, and gradually stripping themselves, and plunging overboard to cool their fevered frames.

Ely retired to the cabin after awhile, unable to stand up under the exhausting heat, and sat in the doorway, watching.

The haze over the land grew darker and thicker, while above it, apparently more than a mile in the air, began slowly to shape itself a brownish black cloud of vast size, which shut out the sun, and produced a darkness as of twilight.

Ely could not help a feeling of awe at the sight, and involuntarily went on deck to his friend, exclaiming in English:

"Good heavens, Meeto! Look at that! Are we not in danger?"

Meeto nodded gravely.

"We are in danger, excellent friend," he said, "but it is a danger no action of ours can avert. If we are to die, let us face death like men. It may pass over. If the wind had not failed us, I should not care."

"Why, where are we, then?"

"Within the death circle of Fusuyama. If he casts up rocks, and one strikes us, we shall never see Kurosama Castle again."

Cold comfort this for Jack; but it had the effect of drawing his mind from Flora, forgetting her in the absorbing interest of the spectacle before him.

The black cloud grew larger momentarily, the darkness more intense, till one could not

see across the deck; and then came a sudden flash of light, up in the air, far away, followed by a report that made the vessel tremble like an aspen leaf.

The next that Jack knew was that the sea was tossing in a violent tempest, the junk caught up on the summit of a huge wave, and swept forward swiftly as if on a train at full speed, for the space of three minutes, the air full of the most deafening clamor he had ever experienced in his life; to which the roar of artillery was insignificant.

All the while the lightning flashed vividly and the vessel was bombarded with a hail of stones, ashes and water that drove him to the cabin, quaking, spite of all his efforts, for shelter from the missiles.

Then, as suddenly as it had come on, the dark cloud lifted, the wave receded, and a strong gust of wind struck the Guardian from seaward, while Heero-saka shouted:

"To the ropes, men of Kurosama! Hoist the sails and put to sea, or we are lost."

And Jack saw, on one side, a tempest coming down from sea, on the other a rocky shore, crowned by the fiery peak of Fusuyama, miles away, vomiting stones and rocks, with the lava flowing from out of its cleft side.

CHAPTER XX.

DOUBLE SWORD COMES.

ON that same morning, while the breeze was still fresh, Flora Hastings, confined in the cabin of Tokichiro's junk, the Green Dragon saw her persecutor coming down, on board of Double Sword's *lorcha*, and hesitated what to do, nervously grasping the dagger she had concealed in her robe.

Down came the *lorcha* like a bird, and she had eyes for none but Tokichiro at first.

Double Sword she did not know and had no wish to see, but she could not help noting the tall figure of the celebrated warrior, towering half a head above the tall young *daimio* beside him.

Involuntarily her eyes turned that way, and, once having looked, she felt in a manner fascinated, for such a man as Old Double Sword she had never seen before, and the foreign aspect of his gray-pointed beard and mustache struck her at once, as it did every one else who saw him.

The idea suddenly came into her head:

"Let me appeal to him for mercy! He is a robber and Christian-hater, but he is not like Tokichiro. He may spare me and I can be no worse off. Besides, he is an old man. He is gray."

The *lorcha* came closer and seemed about to run down the junk, when Double Sword waved his hand, and his vessel was thrown into the wind and came drifting slowly down on the junk, while Tokichiro seemed to be taking leave of Double Sword.

Flora waited till she saw him make a deep salaam to which Double Sword replied with a slight nod and then she rushed out and shrieked aloud:

"Double Sword! Double Sword! Justice, in the prince's name!"

She had screamed it out before any one could stop her, but then the sailors ran toward her with clinched fists, and she would have been roughly treated but for the man to whom she had appealed.

The rover started at her voice and looked toward her as if surprised, then turned on Tokichiro, saying:

"What does this mean?"

To the men in the junk he shouted:

"Hands off the woman. None call to me in vain. Who is she?"

"A mad girl—a fool—a slave of mine," cried Tokichiro. "She tried to run away from my father's house and I have caught her. She should be beaten with bamboos."

Double Sword pulled his long beard and seemed to be hesitating, which Flora observed, for she screamed again:

"It is false, my lord. I am—"

"She lies!" roared Tokichiro. "Cut her tongue out, Yamegata, Matabei! Cut it out!"

And the brutes had actually advanced to execute the order when Double Sword cried:

"Who dares give orders before me? Touch a hair of her head and you shall be impaled on red-hot stakes."

The men dropped their lifted hands as if they had been burned, and the haughty chief turned to Tokichiro, asking:

"How dare you give orders before me! Take that, dog that you are!"

And with that he dealt the young *sainio* a blow with the clinched fist on the side of Tokichiro's head that knocked him into the sea, while he called to the junk:

"Who is that woman, and how came she here, you, Yamegata?"

Flora, who had no idea of how Double Sword's men came to be in the junk, called out:

"Great Double Sword, hear me! I was stolen from my home last night."

Double Sword laughed.

"Is that all? I thought it was something else. Oh, I do not interfere in such things. Settle it with your lover."

And he waved his hand to the sailors to fill the sail again, when Flora, in her wild desperation, shrieked out in English:

"Oh, my God! Will no one help me?"

It was the first time she had spoken her own language, and she saw it made all the men on the *lorcha* start and look at her. As for Double Sword, he preserved his quiet and impassive demeanor, entirely unmoved, but made a counter-signal with his hand, which stayed the motion of his vessel.

Then he asked, in Japanese:

"What wants the woman?"

"Protection," cried Flora, earnestly. "Protection from the man who stole me from my home."

"Where is your home?" asked Double Sword as coldly as before.

As Flora was about to answer, Tokichiro, who had taken his ducking with remarkable coolness and philosophy, climbed in at the side of the junk, rushed at her and clapped his hand over her mouth, roaring:

"Don't listen to her, great sir. She's only a Christian *bouze's* daughter."

Flora struggled frantically for a moment to free herself from his odious clasp, and then, finding herself growing weak, bethought her of her dagger, with which she stabbed Tokichiro twice in her frenzy, hardly knowing what she did, and was only recalled to herself by seeing him stagger back with the blood pouring from his shoulder and breast, while Double Sword shouted:

"Well done, well done! Haul up to the junk! 'Tis a brave girl and worthy to enter the Blue Shark! Haul up!"

Then a rope came flying over the deck of the junk, to be caught by the men on board, and Flora, with a sick feeling at her heart, realized that she had stabbed a man and thought she had killed him.

She dropped the dagger with a shudder and stood trembling; when Tokichiro, who was by no means as badly hurt as she thought, suddenly drew his sword and rushed at her, roaring:

"Die, witch!"

With all the desperate ferocity of his race, he threw back the blade with both hands to cut her in half at the waist, when the crack of a pistol echoed from the deck of the *lorcha*, and Tokichiro dropped on the deck and lay like a log.

Flora looked up and saw Double Sword very quietly replacing a pistol in his belt, a little puff of blue smoke drifting away from him, and he merely motioned with his head to the men to go on hauling.

A few minutes later, junk and *lorcha* were close together, and Old Double Sword, with a light spring, stepped on the bulwarks of Tokichiro's vessel, and, for the first time, looked at Flora Hastings face to face.

What he saw seemed to have a singular effect on him; for he stared, rubbed his eyes, and then stood glaring at her as if he had seen a ghost, showing the first sign of emotion he had yet displayed by nervously tugging at his long beard. He gazed at her from head to foot as if never tired, but displayed no symptoms of recognition other than staring.

It was in Japanese that he asked:

"What is your honorable name, oh lady?"

"Flora Hastings," she replied in English, looking him in the eye steadily. "My father, American and a missionary, was murdered last night by your men, under the orders of this man, you have just killed."

Double Sword betrayed no symptom of having understood a word, for he said in Japanese:

"Be pleased to talk our language."

Flora curled her lip.

Now the man was near, she was sure he was an American or European, shamming ignorance, so she answered in English:

"I am not pleased to do any such thing. I hate the country, the people, everything; and if you have a spark of manly feeling you will land me in Yokohama, where I can apply to our consul, instead of pretending you don't know what I mean."

Double Sword pulled at his beard again as if in thought, and finally asked:

"Where do you come from?"

He spoke aloud in Japanese, as if he wished to be heard by all his men.

"From under the shadow of Prince Kurosama," replied Flora in the same tongue.

A low murmur showed that the news had created a sensation, and Double Sword turned to one of the men who had come with her from the castle.

"Who hired you to cast disgrace on the grave of my mother?" he asked in a low tone of intense anger. "Who told you to dare lift your hand against Kurosama?"

The man addressed hung his head and made no reply; but another, close by, spoke rather sullenly in answer:

"We were ashore and owe nothing to any one, Double Sword. We hire with Satsuma if we please, and we are in his dominions."

Old Double Sword turned round on him with

an expression of such demoniacal ferocity that Flora shrunk back appalled.

"So you would hire with Satsuma," he said, in grating tones. "Swim to him then; for this vessel is Kurosama's. Swim!"

He made one step forward, and the Japanese, quailing before his look, actually leaped into the sea and swam away, afraid to resist the terrible Double Sword.

The chief stamped his foot on the deck.

"This is Kurosama's ship, and Tokichiro is Kurosama's rebellious vassal. Let the men who hired with Tokichiro come forth and yield their heads smilingly."

The girl had never heard the expression before, and it amazed her to see the effect of his words.

One by one, the men who had carried her off stepped out, dropped on their knees, and stretched out their heads, as if to invite the headsman's sword.

Double Sword glanced over them coldly, but seemed satisfied with their unconditional submission, for he said:

"It is well. Choose one of you to die, for rebellion must be punished. Who will die for the rest?"

There was a short pause, and then one of the men rose, drew his dagger and said quietly:

"I am ready, Double Sword."

Flora, stricken with horror, clung to the chief's arm, crying:

"For Heaven's sake forgive them. It was at Tokichiro's orders they acted. Forgive them. I would not be the cause of more deaths. Enough now."

Double Sword raised his hand:

"It is well, Matuske, that the noble lady has asked for your life. You are her slave henceforth. See that no harm comes to her. Let the rest go to their duties and keep out of my sight. I am angry."

The humbled men rose and slunk off like whipped curs, and Flora wondered at the amazing control exercised by this remarkable man over the wild spirits round him.

They seemed to wait on his every look, ready for instant obedience.

He turned to the body of Tokichiro, and stirred it with his foot.

"Take up the dog and carry him on board the Blue Shark. I have not killed him."

Indeed, as Flora looked down, she saw that Tokichiro was still breathing.

She did not know that, with marvelous skill, Double Sword had purposely grazed his skull with a bullet, stunning for the time and leaving a red furrow in the scalp on its track.

She saw them take up the body and carry it on board the *lorcha*; then the chief stalked into the cabin of the junk, turned to her as she followed, and said in a low voice, in English:

"Stay here till I return."

She flushed high with triumph, but obeyed him, while he went out on deck and gave some orders to the men.

The result of the orders was that the *lorcha* and junk were separated, a large number of men coming on board the latter craft, when the tow ropes were cast off, and the *lorcha* sailed away with a bird-like rapidity that was a strong contrast to the labored motion of the junk.

But Double Sword remained on board the junk, and she heard him giving his orders to the men, and pacing the deck as if examining the defenses of the ship, which carried eight long brass guns, of the clumsy medieval pattern still clung to by the *daimios*.

The girl listened patiently for awhile, and was beginning to doze away under the fatigues of the night before, when the door opened and Double Sword walked in, closed the aperture after him, and said to her in English, in low, earnest tones:

"Tell me, for God's sake, who are you?"

Flora looked up in surprise.

"I am Flora Hastings."

The man seemed to be struck by the name, for he repeated it musingly:

"Flora! Flora! How strange!"

The girl, knowing nothing of her own mother's history, stared at him, asking:

"Why strange? It was my mother's name."

"Your mother?" repeated Double Sword.

"Your mother—your mother? Ah, yes! how stupid of me! Flora, poor Flora! And you are her daughter?"

His tone was sad and dreamy, and the girl seemed to lose her fear of him, for she asked, innocently:

"Did you know my mother, sir?"

He did not answer for a moment, but paced up and down the cabin as if he were thinking deeply; while Flora, in a half stupor of surprise and bewilderment, watched him.

At last he stopped in front of her.

"Your name is Hastings, you say? Are you any relation to the missionary at Kiroshima?"

Flora bowed her head, and her eyes filled with tears as she said:

"He was my father, and I fear he was killed by those wretches!"

Double Sword seemed to be surprised.

"Your father? I never knew he was mar-

ried. He has lived alone since I have known him."

Flora looked up anxiously.

"Have you known him, then?"

He turned away his head with a slight frown, answering:

"No; I am a pariah, outcast of my race. I know no Americans. But I have seen him. And he is your father? When were you born, child?"

"In 1863," answered she, with some little hesitation, he was eying her so hungrily.

He nodded slowly and thoughtfully.

"I see! I see! Poor Flora—poor Flora!"

He did not utter another word to her, but stalked out of the cabin, and did not come back for half an hour, when he preceded one of his crew, who bore in a large tray of Japanese dishes.

"Eat," he said in Japanese. "You must be faint. We are taking you back to Kiroshima, and the prince will dispose of you. Eat, and be welcome."

The sailor put down the tray, and Flora was by no means ungrateful, for she felt faint and hungry.

When she had finished her meal there was a knock at the door, and her gruff host entered to say hurriedly:

"Don't be alarmed if the vessel tosses about a good deal and it grows hot. I will take care of Flora Burgess's child."

Then he was gone, and Flora very soon began to experience the same weather which had overtaken the "Guardian of Pilots," but with less severity, the small junk being further out to sea, and at the extreme limit of the dangerous circle of volcanic action.

Through the rolling of the sea and thundering of the volcano Flora Hastings remained on her knees in prayer, till she was thrown violently across the cabin by a sudden lurch of the vessel as the storm-gust first struck the junk, the cold sea-wind sweeping into the vortex produced by the intense heat of the volcanic action.

After that came a heavy storm, the junk plunging and rolling, creaking and groaning, while Flora, more frightened than she had ever been in her life, clung to one of the pillars that supported the deck and expected every moment to go to the bottom.

The commotion lasted but a short time, when there came a change in the motion of the vessel, and she judged it had been put before the wind.

How fast it was going or what had induced the change of course she knew not, but inside of half an hour Double Sword came in at the door to say:

"Flora Hastings, come with me. We are driving ashore, but I will save you."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WRECK.

To the girl, not fully acquainted with sea-terms, the words "We are driving ashore," were not so terrible as they would have been to a sailor.

She got up, quiet and trusting, saying:

"Please take care of me. Is there much danger in driving ashore?"

The man could hardly resist a smile at her simplicity as he answered:

"I will try to do as well as I can. Here, take this and tie it round you."

He handed her a sort of rude life-preserver, made of joints of bamboo tied together in a jacket to go round the body, and led her on deck, where she saw at once that there was a great deal of peril.

The junk had lost one mast, and was driving ahead at a furious pace before a following sea, toward a little white piece of sandy beach that looked hardly large enough to hold her, but was yet the only soft spot in a land cape composed of black cliffs, their rocks half covered below by clouds of white foam.

The men of Double Sword's band were all on deck, looking calmly at the prospect of death before them; but not a voice was heard, not a finger raised, save as the chief gave his few orders to them.

Flora understood nothing but that the vessel was going to be thrown on the shore. Of the force of the shock she was ignorant till the junk grazed on the first rock, throwing every one on their faces.

Then came a mountainous wave that lifted them up like a cork, and a moment later she heard Double Sword shout:

"Leap for your lives. We have struck the right place."

What followed was like a dream to Flora. She was sensible of another shock much heavier than the first, and then came a great wave, which carried her in its green heart, choking and helpless, far, far away, as it seemed to her, till it threw her, rolling over and over, on the hard sand.

Before she could recover her senses fully she felt herself seized by strong hands, and then came a second wave that caught her up and

tore at her as if it would carry her away from the men who had hold of her by the hands.

But this wave passed, and some one called out in Japanese:

"Up the beach! Run! Here it comes again."

Then she was dragged away over the sand, and when at last she was released, she managed to clear the hair out of her eyes, and found that the crew of the junk, wet and bedraggled, were huddled on the beach round her at the foot of the cliff; that the vessel itself had been beached and lay on its side within a hundred feet, broken in half, with the water pouring over it, but that, out at sea, the clouds were fast breaking, while a flock of ships were driving past the land or drifting toward it with broken masts and torn sails, like a gang of wounded sea birds.

Then she heard Double Sword's voice:

"The gods are good to us, friends. None of us are lost and the storm goes down."

Then she realized that the junk had been beached in the only spot where a chance for safety existed for many miles, but that she was all alone in the midst of strange men.

Thinking of this, she hastily rose and tried to rearrange her streaming hair, when Double Sword came to her and said quietly:

"Flora Hastings, we are in danger yet, but we shall conquer it. Will you trust me?"

She looked up at him nervously.

"You know I can't help myself," she said.

"You are of my race and you say you knew my mother. God forgive you if you harm me."

The man bent his brows slightly.

"I ask no forgiveness if I hurt you," he said. "I will take care of you, and be responsible if any harm comes. Listen a moment."

Then he turned to his men.

"What do you wait for? Clear the wreck and save the arms. I'll tell you what to do when you have saved all you can."

They instantly rushed down to the wreck and began to haul things ashore, while the chief continued to Flora:

"Listen. We have been wrecked in the dominions of the Prince of Satsuma, and we shall have to fight our way out. You will be a great danger and incumbrance to us, if it is known you are a woman. Can you have resolution enough to assume the dress of one of my *samurai* and use a pistol, if needs be?"

Flora nodded, but trembled slightly.

"I—I think I could. Has there got to be a battle?"

"Yes. But you are the only person I fear for. You are a brave girl, or you would not have stabbed Tokichiro—"

Flora interrupted, shuddering:

"Oh, don't—don't talk of that."

"Nay, but I must," he answered. "It was well done. It shows you are not a girl to quail in the time of danger. You may have to do it again, to save yourself from disgrace."

Flora covered her face with her hands.

"If it must be, it must be," she murmured.

"Tell me what to do, and I'll do it."

"Very good," he said, more cheerfully.

"Look round you."

She looked up.

They were in a little cove surrounded by lofty cliffs, and one side ran into a point, about a quarter of a mile out to seaward, the top invisible from below.

"You see that cape?" he said. "That is called the Cape of the Dragon. It overlooks the town of Kagosima, where Satsuma dwells. We are going up there, and I am to signal the *lorcha*, if she be in sight, to take us off. If she comes to-day we are all right, but if not, the Prince of Satsuma is sure to claim us all for prisoners. In that case we must fight. If he knows we have a woman of the Christians with us, he will be more eager than ever. Therefore you must put on the dress of a boy and keep close to me."

Flora looked round her hopelessly.

"But where—how can I change my clothes? There is no place—"

"Yonder is a nook between two rocks. My men will not go near you. I'll send the dress to you. I'll bring it myself. Go."

He stalked away, and Flora saw him by the wreck superintending the work.

She went off toward the nook he had pointed out and hid herself.

Very soon after she heard his step on the sand and he threw into the nook a whole armful of clothing.

"Take what you like," he said, "and leave the rest. I'll give you your weapons when you come out."

She found all sorts of rich garments, that had evidently come from the cabin of the junk, and attired herself as rapidly as she could in the dress of a young *samurai*—a task all the easier because there is but little distinction between male and female attire in Japan.

When she had assumed the dress, even to the straw sandals and clogs, she went out on the beach and found Double Sword's band gathered round a huge box, which seemed to be an arm-chest from the way in which the swords and pistols were coming out.

The chief nodded to her, and said aloud in Japanese to his men:

"This is my new page, Myamoto. You will all respect him as my page. Anything else is *kapton*. You hear?"

"We hear, great lord," repeated the men in chorus, and they bowed reverentially before the new page, who on his (or her) part, looked very red in the face.

"Here, Myamoto, take these," said Double Sword, and as he spoke he handed the seeming boy a short sword and a revolver. "Put them in your sash and use them as well as you did the knife to-day. Good boy!"

Myamoto obeyed, and the chief distributed from the arms chest to all the men an allowance of cartridges that appeared from their American boxes and labels to have been recently imported.

When all were loaded, he said to them:

"Up the rocks and scale the peak. You know what to do before they come after us."

The men started up the rocks and he said to Flora in English:

"Keep close to me in climbing. It was lucky that junk had an arms-chest, or we might have fared badly. When we get time you shall tell me your story. Meanwhile, we have to do all we know to get out of this alive."

He led the way to the foot of the cliffs, up which the men were climbing steadily, and showed Flora the easiest path, frequently helping her with his strong hand, till at last they reached a ledge of rocks, beyond which the cliff became a slope, and from which they commanded a view of the sea for a long distance.

Double Sword rested here a while, to give his exhausted companion a chance, and pointed out to her the prospect.

"The storm is over already," he said. "Do you know what it was?"

Flora shuddered.

"I don't. It was horrible. Oh, how I wish I was out of this terrible place!"

Double Sword smiled and patted her head as if she had been a child, while she was almost surprised herself at the confidence she felt toward this stranger.

"It is a fine country to those who know it well, Flora," he said. "This was only a short eruption of Fussyama, our great volcano. It is over now, and our only trouble lay in the wind-gust which followed it. We were too near the shore and it drove us in when we lost our main-mast."

Flora looked out over the sea and insensibly the beauty of the scene tempted her to say in a half-grudging tone:

"It's not the country I hate perhaps, so much as the people. They're such brutes."

Double Sword uttered a slight sigh as he heard her speak.

"You are not constrained to live among them," he said, "as others may be, perhaps. They have their good and bad sides. Come, let us be going. It is not safe here yet."

He rose and helped her up the rest of the slope to the summit of the promontory, from whence he showed her the distant peak of Fussyama, now hidden in a column of dark smoke, which spread, pall-like, over its summit.

"There is our storm-brewer," he said. "When he lights his fires, we know all is safe, but when he goes to sleep awhile and wakes up to make his complaint, we have to pay him respect. Hark! He complains again."

A succession of dull smothered reports, like the booming of distant thunder, came from the pall of black smoke, and Flora could see black specks shooting up in the air and curving so as to fall on the country round.

One of them took shape as a rock weighing many tons, which fell within a quarter of a mile of them, at the edge of a large town below them, with a shock that stirred the solid rock under their feet.

The fall of the rock was followed by a loud groaning noise in the earth, and the whole promontory on which they stood trembled violently, so that Flora turned sick and faint and clung to the arm of the chief.

Indeed, for some moments Double Sword's cheek blanched, and his men threw themselves on the ground.

There is something peculiarly appalling in the sensation produced by an earthquake, when the solid ground itself ceases to be solid.

It passed away after a while, and Double Sword pointed to the town below.

"That is Kagosima," he said, "and as soon as the people know we are here there will be fun, you'll see."

"Why?" asked she innocently.

Double Sword chuckled to himself as if he were much amused at something, while he wore a proud scornful expression as he looked down at the town, muttering:

"Ay, ay, there'll be fun, gentlemen. I've waked you up before and I'll do it again."

Then he said to Flora:

"I'll tell you why. I serve Kurosama, and old Satsuma, below there, hates me like poison. He used to take toll of every ship that passed, till Kurosama got an edict from the Mikado allowing him to protect the pilots. Now I have been wrecked on Satsuma's coast, and he has the right to claim me as a prisoner. That's why there will be fun, Flora."

"You mean fighting?"

"Certainly."

"And you call that fun?"

Double Sword laughed aloud.

"Ay, ay, the best of all fun, when you have it your own way. To-day, however, if I mistake not, the fun may be on the other side."

"Why?"

The giant chief cast an uneasy glance out to sea before he answered:

"Because my *lorcha* is not in sight. If she were I'd defy them all."

"Why did you leave her then?" asked Flora.

"For your sake," he answered quietly. "The *lorcha* had no cabin, no privacy. She is a mere fighting and racing machine. Had it not been for the eruption of Fussyama and the storm, I should have taken you to Kurosama castle. Now we have time, tell me how you came to be carried off last night."

Flora, thus urged told her whole story, the chief listening attentively, as they sat on the summit of the rocky promontory that overlooked Kagosima Bay.

Below them in the harbor lay a number of vessels, most of them damaged, several sunk, so that only the tops of their masts protruded from the water, while the ruins of more than one tall tower showed that the earthquake had done its work.

Around the pair, reclined on the rocks, lay the *ronins* of Double Sword, nearly a hundred, forming a circle of watchful eyes, to scan land and sea, while invisible from below.

Double Sword sat by Flora, while he listened to her story, and toward the end she saw, from the expression of his face, that he was no longer attending to her, but watching the town instead.

When she had finished, he said absently:

"Thank you, I'll see that you are—"

He stopped abruptly, rose to his feet and called to his men in Japanese:

"Satsuma is coming! Prepare to defend the point."

Flora looked down and saw from the glitter of arms that a body of men were coming toward the promontory.

"How do they know we are here?" she added.

Double Sword pointed to the bay.

"I saw a fishing-boat come in while you were speaking. She must have seen the wreck and reported it. They are coming to find who we are."

Then he looked all round him, as if to examine the defensive capabilities of the place and finally led the way along the top to the end of the promontory.

Here the rocks ended in a perpendicular wall on three sides, leaving a platform on the top about a furlong in breadth covered with loose boulders and stones.

Double Sword directed his men, who, under his orders, rolled stones and boulders into a rude breastwork, a task which occupied nearly an hour, during which time they were not molested.

The distance from the town below was about two miles in a straight line, but the way was steep and precipitous and the Satsuma men advanced slowly.

When the defenses were at last completed, Double Sword went to the edge of the cliffs to look out to sea; and after a long examination, cried out in Japanese:

"The Blue Shark comes! Make the signal!"

Flora had not noticed, in the confusion of the shipwreck, that the men had brought up the rocks a small brass mortar, but as soon as it was set in the midst of them, one of the men produced a red ball about six inches in diameter, which he placed in the cannon, while the rest poured in powder from a horn.

The match was applied, and the red ball shot up in the air to a great height, when it burst with a sharp report, sending forth a cloud of dark-blue smoke which assumed the form of a huge shark, that undulated to and fro in the breeze for nearly a minute before it blew away.

The men all gazed eagerly out to sea, toward a sail on the horizon Flora could hardly distinguish.

A few moments later a speck shot up into the sky above the sail, and burst into another cloud that assumed the shape of a fish of dark blue.

The signal was answered:

CHAPTER XXII.

SATSUMA'S WRECKERS.

THE men of the band raised a yell of great delight, and Double Sword smiled proudly as he looked at them.

"What say you, men of the sea?" he asked;

"shall we wait here, or attack the enemy?"

"Attack the enemy!" was the instant reply, as if the men were crazy with delight.

Double Sword laughed.

"But my page: who will care for him?"

"He shall stay in the midst of us!" cried a big fellow with a black eye, the victim of Jack Ely's prowess a few days before. "We will take care of him; none shall hurt him."

"What say you?" asked Double Sword, turning to Flora. "Dare you go with us to attack these men, if we take care of you?"

Flora hesitated and paled.

"How can I?" she asked in English. "I am a woman. It is not my place to fight."

Double Sword frowned slightly.

"You are a woman of my race. These men adore courage. If you dare only come with us and look on, your dominion will be complete over all my men. They will worship you as a goddess. If they think you a common, cowardly woman, I cannot answer for your safety when I am not near you. My advice is to conquer your fears and come with us."

She drew a deep breath.

"I'll come," she said.

Double Sword turned to his men.

"My page is as brave as a lion; he will come with us," he said.

There was a wild yell of delight, and the advance began at once, the savage, half-naked *ronins* rushing forward and leaving their breast-works behind them in disdain.

Five minutes' sharp running brought them to the head of the promontory, where they saw the path beneath them, leading to Kagosima crowded with troops and gaudy banners, the head of the column within a few hundred feet of the top.

"Let them come up!" shouted Double Sword, showing himself on the top of the rocks.

"I am Double Sword, the terror of the sea. Let the Satsuma men come up, and I will give them to the vultures for prey."

His words produced a great effect on the men below.

The head of the column halted, and cries arose from front to rear:

"Forward for Satsuma!"

"Back, back!"

"Double Sword is there!"

"Forward! Down with him! Down!"

The sight of the single man on the summit of the rock had daunted them, so great was the terror inspired by his name; and it was nearly ten minutes before the leaders could get them to advance, which they did in a huddled mass, with protruded spears, urged on behind by blows of sticks in the hands of the *daimios*.

Double Sword waited until they were within a few feet of the summit, when he fell back and made a signal to his men.

The whole band gathered in a semicircle round the head of the pass, and fell flat on the ground.

Presently the spearsmen made their appearance over the top of the swell and came tramping confusedly on, as if pushed from behind.

They had hardly attained a firm footing when a rapid rattling fire of revolvers opened on them under which they fell like corn before the sickle, when the wild *ronins* leaped up with a shrill yell, and charged with a sword in each hand.

The effect of the charge was immediate.

The frightened Satsuma men dropped their weapons and turned to run; the confusion became horrible, and the whole mass of men was thrust headlong over the steep path and sent whirling down.

At the middle of the long column many were thrust bodily off the path and over precipices of thirty or forty feet high, one falling on another.

Old Double Sword waved his hand—for he had not yet drawn his sword, and shouted down at the full stretch of his voice:

"Kurosama spits on Satsuma! Come on again if ye dare!"

He was answered by a savage yell from below, and the Satsuma men came up the path again, no longer cautious, but wild with rage.

To be defied on their own coast by a foe who had been shipwrecked was too much; for Japanese are tenacious on a point of honor, and especially on old customs, however ridiculous or savage.

Satsuma had been entitled to the proceeds of all shipwrecks from time immemorial, and all wrecked persons had been made slaves.

To be sure Satsuma had often had to fight for his rights, and Double Sword's reputation had daunted the men below at first.

But to be defied and mocked at was too much, and still more when they knew that old Prince Shimatz Satsuma was watching them from the roof of his palace.

They raised a wild yell and came rushing up recklessly, to be met by a shower of rocks that Double Sword's men sent rolling down among them, crushing whole ranks in their way.

This drove them back a second time, but it did not last long, for the rocks at the top of the path were not so numerous as elsewhere.

Their third rush was resolutely made, and preceded by a fire of clumsy matchlocks, which sent four-ounce bullets whistling over the top of the rocks.

Double Sword called out in Japanese:

"Run! Let them come up! Run!"

Then he caught hold of Flora's arm, and the whole band ran as if in great confusion, the girl not understanding what it all meant, but obeying her conductor.

She heard shouts and yells behind her, flew on as if for her life, reached the strong barrier, and ran in to crouch behind a boulder in the instinct of safety.

Double Sword's men did the same, and she saw them all reloading their pistols and laughing to each other, while outside, the Satsuma men were coming on in a dense mob, howling like demons; but, as even she noticed, *not coming very fast.*

Double Sword stood up coolly surveying the advancing foe.

Even yet he had not touched a weapon. Suddenly Flora saw him lay his hand on the pistols in his belt and throw himself down, his breast on a stone, leveling the weapons over it.

"Stop!" he called out in Japanese. "If you come any further I shall kill you all. This place belongs to Kurosama."

And his voice actually produced a halt. Then a man on horseback came into sight in the midst of the crowd and they heard a yell:

"Satsuma! Satsuma! Drive them into the sea!"

That cry set them going again, for Double Sword recognized, in the figure on the horse, the old prince himself.

"Now," he cried to his men; "now give it to them!"

With that he began to fire with a coolness and precision that speedily made its mark, and was followed so ably by his men that the summit of the promontory became a perfect shambles, and the Satsuma men halted and began to fire their long matchlocks at the breastworks, with little effect, for the *ronins* of Double Sword were completely sheltered behind the bowlders.

As for Flora, the poor girl crouched in mortal terror behind her big bowlder, no one noticing her, till Double Sword put back his pistols, flashed out his two long swords, and roared:

"Charge! Drive them into the sea!"

Then she sprung up in the blind instinct of following her friends, and saw the wild men, in a long line, leap the stones and go rushing at the encircling crowd like madmen, cutting and slashing with a ferocity to which the rage of the Satsuma men seemed child's play.

The crowd, outnumbering the sailors twenty to one, was driven back instantly, and the band of Double Sword, dividing in two portions, drove them over the rocks at either side, smiting resistlessly all the time, amid a wild wail of horror from the luckless wretches themselves as they fell over.

Then the two parties reunited and swept across the promontory; the Satsuma men, completely demoralized, fleeing in dismay, their prince overwhelmed in the general disaster, while Double Sword, in the flush of his triumph cried after them:

"Get into your city, cowards of Satsuma! Had I my hand here I would assault your walls, and make Satsuma kiss the toe of my sandal for his life."

In the noise and confusion his words were unheard, but the discomfited Satsuma men continued their flight headlong, and Double Sword returned to his old post, saying to his men:

"Throw the dogs over. My little page must not see too much to turn his stomach."

For Flora, not knowing what else to do, had run on with the rest, and thus had come into perils she would have escaped had she staid behind, for she had got separated at one time, when the band parted, and had been run at by a Satsuma man with a sword.

Frightened and desperate, she had fired her pistol blindly, seeing the man drop, and had been made aware by the yells of her own party, that she had unwittingly become a heroine.

After that brief passage of arms the men had swept before her, and now she was greeted by all, as Double Sword had predicted, with a respect amounting to adoration, while they hastened to remove the traces of battle from before her eyes, hurling dead and living alike over the rocks at either side the promontory into the sea.

The chief meanwhile took her by the arm and led her to the end of the point.

"Look yonder," he said. "Do you know that vessel at all?"

He pointed out to a large junk just entering the port, the sun blazing down on her long row of brass cannon.

Flora shook her head.

"No, I do not," she said.

"That is the Guardian of the Pilots," he replied, "the vessel of my chief. She has come here to demand something of Satsuma, most probably myself. Flora, the fun will begin again soon."

"But why?" she asked, shuddering. "Good Heavens, have you not had enough slaughter yet?"

Double Sword smiled rather proudly.

"Not yet. Child, it is necessary to show these men that our blood is better than theirs, or they will ride over us. Hark!"

As he spoke the sharp report of a brass gun in the bay below drew all eyes to the magnificent junk, and she threw her sails aback and dropped a boat from her side to row ashore, where the quays were crowded with people staring at her.

Double Sword looked down at them.

"She is going to demand my release," he

said, "and Satsuma will not grant it. If the *lorcha* were only here now."

"You mean your vessel?" asked Flora. "Yonder she comes."

And she, in her turn, pointed out to seaward, where the swift *lorcha* could be seen in the offing, sailing rapidly in, but still some miles away, so far that her hull was hidden.

Double Sword patted her shoulder in a fatherly sort of way, observing:

"Good girl. You have good eyes. We shall be safer when she comes up. But what is the junk about? I wish I had a good glass."

They peered down into the bay, and saw the long barge approach the quay; saw a lane opened in the crowd, while a party from the boat went into the streets of Kagosima.

They watched the streets with the black surging crowd for some time, till Flora said to her chief:

"All the soldiers have left us, and are going to those black things below. Are they cannon?"

Double Sword looked where she pointed.

"By heavens, you're right," he said. "They are going to fight the junk. She'll be knocked to pieces. Heero-saka is mad."

"Who is he?" asked Flora.

"The captain of the junk. What can he be about? The man's a lunatic."

In his excitement he was talking his native tongue to himself, as he watched the junk.

It was true, as Flora had said.

The soldiers were swarming into the stone forts on either side the harbor, and manning the guns for action.

They were old medieval concerns, that had been knocked to pieces, twenty years before, by the guns of the British fleet, but what was left of them was all too formidable for a single wooden vessel, armed with guns whose bore could hardly exceed five inches, though their length was a good fourteen feet.

Double Sword, for the first time that day, began to look anxious.

He paced the platform to and fro, frequently looked to seaward, and at last as he watched the preparations below, burst out:

"She'll be sunk! The idiot will have her sunk for sure, if this goes on. It must be stopped somehow."

Flora, innocently enough, asked:

"How can you stop it?"

"I will show myself," he answered. "They don't know I'm here."

Then he called to his men:

"Fire another signal. The men in the junk think we are prisoners."

A few moments later the brass mortar went off and the smoke signal of the Blue Shark floated over the heads of the people in the Guardian of Pilots and the men of Satsuma.

The smoke seemed to cause a lull in the hostilities, for no guns were fired.

After waiting a little, however, they saw a flash and puff from the decks of the junk, and a bomb shot into the air, which exploded.

Instead of a cloud of black smoke a huge white paper balloon was expanded by the charge, and Flora saw with astonishment that it was made into the exact likeness of a lady in Japanese dress.

Double Sword seemed puzzled.

"What do they mean?" he muttered.

A second flash, and a second bomb exploded.

This time it was a red balloon, bearing on the side some Japanese characters, which Flora, who was quite familiar with the common written character, interpreted aloud:

"We demand the prisoner, the woman."

"I thought so," said Double Sword. "And we have no answering signal except another shark. Fire it, men."

A third time the brass mortar sent its missive and then the chief said to his men, as he girt his sash tighter:

"Who will follow me to spike those guns, till the *lorcha* arrives?"

He was answered by a yell of delight, which showed that the dare-devils who followed him were by no means tired of fighting.

As a matter of fact, they were picked men, all of large size and great personal strength and activity, who had been trained by Double Sword to despise any thing that could be brought against them as much as the buccaneers of old had despised the Spaniards.

Owing to their protected position on the rocks, their superior weapons and their ambidexterous way of handling the swords, they had hitherto routed the Satsuma men with hardly a wound to one of their own side.

Now they were eager for more of it, and looked like dogs straining at the leash, as the chief called out to them:

"Who'll follow?"

"Come then," he said, as they shouted back to him their readiness.

He took Flora's arm.

"Are you afraid to come?" he asked.

She looked down, and shuddered slightly; then set her teeth and answered:

"Not if you lead. I begin to think you men are not such terrible fellows, after all."

The girl had actually caught the spirit of the battle, like Joan of Arc and the Maid of Sara-

—a, and imagined *she* would like to see more battles.

"Come on then," he said. "Keep behind me and don't get lost, or that's the last of you. Now, where's the *lorcha*?"

He looked over the sea, and saw the swift vessel heading for the harbor like a bird on the wing now within less than a mile.

Then he looked down on the harbor, and there was the barge, returning from the quay, while the crowd on the shore stood as thick as a swarm of bees.

"Forward!" cried Double Sword, and they set off down the steep path to the town, unnoticed in the greater interest of the fight with the junk.

As they struck the foot of the cliffs, gun after gun echoed from the harbor, and on they went, for the forts, as hard as they could run, but without uttering a yell.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DOUBLE SWORD'S DEVILS.

THE city of Kagosima, though only the capital of a principality, was densely populated, holding at least fifty thousand people.

It ran around three sides of a deep bay, and was fortified, toward the water, by a row of stone castles, once lofty and massive, now in ruins, since the British bombardment, twenty years before.

One of these forts lay right in front of Double Sword and his band, and the soldiers inside had already begun to fire off the guns, when the sudden entry of the desperate chief and his crew of hard-hitters caused the fire to cease as if by magic, while the soldiers were driven out like so many sheep.

The daring sea-rover, instead of spiking the guns and retreating, as most men would have done, immediately turned the fire of this fort on the opposite side of the harbor, and produced such a commotion in the works from surprise, that the fire on the junk ceased entirely, and the forts began to fight each other, with true Japanese indifference to the merits of the quarrel.

As soon as this happy consummation was effected, he spiked the guns of the fort in which he was, and sallied forth, to find the streets deserted, the town on fire in several places, and the junk pouring shot into the houses.

Traversing the quay rapidly, he took the other forts in rear, with a rapidity and success only to be accounted for by the audacity of his surprise, and had all the sea-guns in the defenses spiked, save in one fort at the mouth of the harbor, before the Satsuma men had recovered from their amazement at his desperate daring.

When they at last found what had been done, soldiers and *samurai* came raging down to the quay, to find Double Sword and his men already embarked in *sampan*s, boats, barges, fishing-junks, and anything that was moored near the wharf, putting off to the "Guardian of Pilots," which still lay in the midst of the harbor, pouring grape and canister into the houses, over the heads of the men in the boats, as they rowed.

Flora Hastings, crouched in the stern of the first barge, before Double Sword, who was trying to shield her with his body, cowered before the hissing of the bullets, beginning to realize for the first time the danger she had been in. By the time she reached the junk, more than a dozen of Double Sword's men had been wounded, and several killed outright.

Their arrival on board changed the face of affairs; for the desperate rover at once took the command, putting Captain Heero-saka aside as a matter of course, and not yielding even to Prince Meeto.

As for Jack Ely, he was so amazed to see the daring of the man, that he did not try to offer any remonstrance to the summary measures of the renowned outlaw.

Double Sword's men, crowding into the junk, set out her sweeps, and deliberately pulled her in toward the quay, loading and firing her guns with a rapidity the regular sailors had never exhibited, cleared the quay in ten minutes, and then turned their attention to the fort at the mouth of the harbor, which still fired an occasional shot.

Sweeping up near it, he drove the poor Satsuma men from their guns with showers of grape, landed a party to spike the guns, and finally swept out of a silent harbor in triumph, leaving a burning city and demoralized foe behind him, and causing Jack Ely to exclaim in English, as he held out his hand:

"By Jove, uncle Stephen, you're a terror to evil-doers, you are. But for you, we should have been sunk."

He said this in the hope that his uncle would recognize the greeting, for he had almost forgotten Flora Hastings in his excitement of coming across his relative in such a scene.

Double Sword made as if he had not heard him, and pushed him gently to one side with his large hand, while he went on giving his orders to the men as the junk glided slowly out of the harbor.

And in the midst of all this confusion, Flora

Hastings, in her page's dress, was standing by a gun forward, so that Jack had not seen her. She had seen him, for woman's eyes are quick, but she did not want him to see her, so she kept among the big dare-devils of Double Sword's band (in whom she now felt an unbounded confidence, taking the place of her former distrust), and hid herself.

As for Jack he was so mortified by his uncle's unceremonious rebuff, that he walked off to his friend Meeto, who had retired to the cabin as soon as Double Sword took command, and said to him:

"Well, if that man is my uncle, I must say he has lost his manners in Japan."

Meeto smiled rather quizzically.

"Why?"

"Why? I just claimed his acquaintance, and he pretended he didn't understand me—cut me dead."

"You have no cause to be surprised."

"Why not?"

"I told you his secret was *adultery*, and you have failed to respect it," said Meeto, severely. "I thought better of you."

Jack colored deeply and looked sullen.

"The men didn't know it," he said. "I spoke English to him."

"You might have known better. When he is ready to recognize you he will do so, and not before. In the mean time, you were mad about a lady a little while ago. Have you entirely forgotten her?"

Meeto's tone was cold and sarcastic, and Jack colored deeper than before with anger.

"No," he answered shortly. "She was driven out of my head in the battle, but Satsuma has not got her. He denied any knowledge of such a thing."

Jack had been in the barge to make the formal demand on the old prince, who had denied all knowledge of Tokichiro's doings, promised to give him up if he came into Kagosima, but finally fought on his rights, as lord of the manor, to take Double Sword and his men as wrecking perquisites.

"It is all well for him to deny it," answered Meeto, "but either he has your Flora, or she is in Double Sword's *lorcha*."

Jack stared at him.

"In Double Sword's *lorcha*! She is out at sea. How came he on shore?"

Meeto smiled.

"That is Double Sword's *nayboon*. When he chooses to tell us, he will do so, I suppose."

Jack was silenced, for there was something in the calm impassive face of Meeto that reminded him of his own position as the adopted son of Myamoto Kurosama, with its duties and responsibilities.

He went on deck gloomily enough. Now the excitement was over and the battle won, he had no idea whether or not Flora Hastings had been saved or lost, and no one would tell him. At least Meeto wouldn't.

He thought he would try to address Double Sword again, avoiding his former mistake, so he went to Captain Heero-saka, saying:

"Be pleased to make me known to the Double Sword. I never met him before."

Captain Heero-saka showed his teeth in a polite smile, and did as he was asked.

Double Sword saluted the young man with cold gravity, saying:

"The young prince-adopted is very welcome. He is a warrior worthy to lead Kurosama, or my lord would not have taken him as a brother to Prince Meeto."

Jack bowed, and summoned courage to say:

"Great Double Sword, my brother and I came out in quest of a girl, stolen by Tokichiro Kama. Have you seen aught of her?"

Double Sword looked out to sea, where his *lorcha* was now lying-to, waiting for the slow approach of the junk.

"My lord," he said politely, "has doubtless seen in his own land very swift vessels, but I can assure him that the Blue Shark excels them all in speed."

Rebuffed again!

Jack ground his teeth and turned away, saying coldly:

"I've no doubt of it; but a steamer would catch her any time."

Double Sword shook his head.

"Pardon me for differing with your most honorable lordship, but that is quite a mistake. Sailing with the wind behind her I have outstripped many steamers. Once on her decks a man might defy pursuit. Would my lord like to try a cruise in her?"

"Many thanks," returned Jack, gloomily, "but I do not care where I go now. I fear that poor girl has been killed, like her father and aunt. I've no heart to go on a sail."

He turned away to the cabin and Double Sword looked after him with a singular expression of half sorrow.

Then he went forward among the crew and beckoned to his seeming page, whom he took to the very bow of the junk, waving the men away from them.

"Flora Hastings," he said in low, hurried tones, and in English, "do you know a young man called Ely?"

The color in the pretended Myamoto's cheek

answered the question much louder than the murmur—

"Yes, sir."

"Do you wish to see him now?"

Flora shook her head vehemently.

"No, no, no. Not for anything."

Double Sword nodded.

"I see. Flora, that youth followed you and ran into danger to get you back."

Flora looked surprised and pleased.

"Was it he last night?"

"I think so. I can find out. Meantime, do you know Meeto Kurosama?"

"Yes; I met him coming over on the Golden Gate. A very pleasant young man."

"Dare you trust yourself to him if I leave the ship?"

She hesitated and looked up softly.

"No," she said, "I know you. I have seen you in battle. I would trust you with my life. No one else here."

"Not Jack Ely?"

She colored high, but shook her head.

"Failing you, yes. But you saved me. He only failed."

Double Sword smiled, but a flush of decided pleasure crossed his dark face.

"You are very complimentary," he said.

"You take after your mother, whom you strongly resemble—very strongly. I will take care of you as you request. Keep among the men."

He went aft and spoke to Captain Heero-saka.

"I shall shift my flag to the *lorcha* again. Doubtless you will be glad of it."

Heero-saka grinned affably, for it is Japanese politeness to look most pleased when you are most bored. So he replied:

"I am penetrated with sorrow at the departure of so formidable a warrior, from whom the great Taiko Sama might take lessons. Is it your honorable pleasure to precede us to Kiro-sima? I await the orders."

Double Sword shook his head.

"I may not go there yet. Do you proceed there at once, however. I shall follow you before you have had audience of the prince. Signal the *lorcha*."

The captain waved a flag and the *lorcha* came skimming down, with only half her crew on board, the weather canoe almost out of the water at every jump, and Double Sword transferred his crew with a celerity that excited Jack Ely's admiration.

He did not see the slight figure of the pretended page among the burly giants of the crew, and little Myamoto hid himself in the deck-house as soon as he got aboard.

Then the *lorcha* skimmed away, and Flora Hastings found herself for the first time in the midst of the desperate sea rovers of whom she had heard such fearful stories, fully in the power of the dreaded Double Sword, and yet feeling withal a sense of such security and pleasant excitement that she wondered at the nature of her own confidence.

Wherever she looked she saw giants, who were also slaves to her, who hung on her every word and motion as much as on those of Double Sword himself, and had evidently put her on an ideal throne as queen of the band.

The craft, as she saw, was but a flimsy structure, save in one place.

The deck-house stood on a firm platform, and inside of it stood a huge iron gun, with a muzzle into which she could almost put her head. The carriage was of modern construction, and the whole was entirely hidden by the frail bamboo deck-house.

All round the walls were black cases of cartridges, and a hammock swung from a frame beside the gun.

That was all in the house, as far as she saw, though a back door opened into a small addition, which seemed to be full of bags of rice and other stores.

Tired of the bareness of the scene, she was turning to go on deck, when she heard a low sigh, and perceived a man lying under the gun, sprawling out on the deck, face downward, turning his head sidewise to look at her.

The face was that of Tokichiro Kama, and a second look showed her that he was fastened to rings in the deck like a spread-eagle, and unable to move.

The sight moved her to pity, for she held no further animosity against the young *sainio*, and she went out to beg of Double Sword to release him.

For a wonder, the chief refused her request with a cold, severe manner, and told her sharply before the men:

"Mind your own affairs, master page, or you may share Tokichiro's punishment. I command the Blue Shark."

Flora was so much taken aback by the unexpected rebuff that the tears came to her eyes, and she went quickly away behind the deck-house to hide them.

Double Sword took no notice of her for some time, but continued to work his fleet vessel as she skimmed rapidly away toward Kiro-sima, till the approach of sunset, when he called out:

"Myamoto, come here!"

Flora remembered her name, and came to

him, when he led the way into the deck-house, took his seat on one of the boxes of cartridges, signed her to another, and said in English:

"You were foolish to speak to me before the men as you did. That fellow is a traitor to the head of his clan. He broke his oath, tried to rob Kurosama under his castle walls, violated the pledge of protection given to your father, and, as you say, murdered him, though I don't believe he's dead. Now you want him released. Do you wish him to escape his doom, and die like an honest man, by *hara-kiri*? It cannot be done. He must be punished for the sake of the example. If you were a Japanese woman now, you would cut off his head where he lies. The old custom of *kataki-uchi* is still in force in Kurosama. You, as the next of kin, are the avenger of blood."

Flora shuddered.

"Oh, I could not do it."

"Then leave him to the prince. You are too soft-hearted. Your father must be avenged, if indeed he be slain. We shall know by midnight, when we shall be at Kiro-sima. But I think he is not killed."

Flora clasped her hands.

"Why do you think so? God bless you if you tell me the truth, Double Sword, but tell me why you think it."

"Because my men were into the affair, and I have questioned them. They all say that Tokichiro ordered your father's death, but they, being prudent, only struck with the flat of their swords. The old man they say was stunned, and the old woman was so frightened she fainted. I did not tell you before for fear of the shock to you, but now I know you can stand anything."

Flora began to weep softly.

"Oh, how thankful I am, sir. You have been so good to me. Who are you?"

Double Sword frowned gloomily.

"Never mind. I lost my name years ago. Now I am Double Sword. Ask no more questions. By midnight we shall be at Kiro-sima, and I will take you to your father."

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHRISTIANITY'S LAW.

In the little garden of Missionary Hastings, Miss Mehitable Jezebel Hoyt, amiable old maid with the terrible name that she was, stood behind the great cane chair in which lay back her brother, his head bound up with a white bandage, his face deadly pale under the coat of tan supplied by many a Japanese summer, an open Bible on his knees.

The poor man had been praying for strength to bear his misfortunes, and Mehitable had been weeping in concert with him, while around them were clustered several of their humble native converts, weeping because their pastor wept.

It was late night, for they did not dare to meet and hold Christian worship in the daylight, for fear of insult and abuse.

The missionary had, as Double Sword told Flora, only been knocked senseless on the preceding night, while his sister had fainted from fright. When they recovered and missed Flora they knew not what to do, surrounded as they were by foes who would only jeer at them in their misfortune.

Miss Hoyt had suggested a complaint to the prince, but the missionary had told her it was useless and unwise.

"He would but tell us it served us right for abusing the *bouzes*," he said. "We have no hope but in the mercy of the Lord. Peradventure he will save our child."

So he had satisfied himself by calling a meeting of his little flock of converts, to whom he had been reading the story of the persecutions and beatings undergone by the Apostles and had been commenting on it with a fervor that borrowed pathos from his own forlorn condition.

The poor man was perhaps for the first time in his life showing the power of genuine faith to overcome misfortune with none of the obstinacy and narrow superstition that had led him the day before to despise his daughter's unhappiness and dispose him to condemn her willfully to the same disgusts and insults that had become second-nature to him, but were such a sore trial to a sensitive girl like her.

The converts knelt in a row round him under the faint light of two paper lanterns, only the sincere ones among them, and they were very few now that real trial had come.

Poor Hastings, as he concluded his exhortation, fell back exhausted in his chair and said to his half-sister in a low voice in English:

"Woe is me, sister Mehitable. I fear I have not done my duty as I ought."

"Why, brother, why?"

"We should have better results than this after thirty years, sister. There are but nine here to night. Where are the rest?"

"Afraid to come," she said mournfully.

"I feared so. It is a judgment on me for pride, Mehitable. That poor child was right. It is a stiff-necked and perverse generation and our time has been wasted."

Mehitable said nothing. The poor woman was beginning to feel that all her cherished con-

victions might be wrong now that her brother was yielding.

"Yes," he went on in a dreamy way. "It is possible I may have been wrong all these years. It may have been pride in my own powers that kept me here when I might have done more good in other places. If so, I am punished, sister. Our child in whom I had such pride and hope!"

And then the natural man overcame the austere and self-controlled minister, and Hastings dropped his head on his hands and burst into a tempest of sobs and tears, while the native converts drew nearer and moaned aloud like dumb beasts sympathizing with a master.

As for Mehitable, she broke down, too, and sobbed on her brother's shoulder, so that the scene was one of general sorrow, when they heard steps approaching from the fishing village below, and the native converts jumped up in a great fright, exclaiming:

"Samourai! Samourai!"

They thought that it was some one coming to break up their meeting and beat them, as had so often happened before, and the poor missionary, fully believing the same, said to them with a wave of the hand:

"Go, children, go. It is my place to meet them and die at my post—not yours. Go."

They needed no second permission to scud away like frightened deer, and the trampling in the bushes below continued with the clink of an occasional sword caught in a branch, showing armed men to approach.

Hastings lay back in his chair and closed his eyes as he said to Mehitable:

"It is the end of all, sister. I feel it coming. We are to suffer for the faith. Be it so. I can not be cheated of my reward hereafter."

The poor woman, with trembling limbs, clung to the back of the chair and gazed at the bushes from whence the trampling came with dilated eyes.

Presently she uttered a low exclamation like a smothered shriek as a big, brawny swordsman came out, followed by a score like himself, and stalked toward the chair.

She recognized, from the peculiar garb of the men, who all wore scarlet, the desperadoes of Double Sword, of whom she had heard so much as Christian-baters, and she saw them, with silent horror, emerge from the bushes and form a grim, ominous circle round the chair in which lay her brother.

They came on and on till she could count no more, and still not one said a word, though they clustered round the chair in a way that rendered escape impossible, had the missionary dreamed of any such thing.

At last they stopped coming and there was a pause of nearly five minutes, during which Hastings kept his face buried in his hands, for he fully expected he was about to be murdered.

The samourai watched him in the same grim silence, and poor Miss Mehitable trembled more and more every minute.

At last came more trampling, and four stalwart samourai came into the arena, carrying a man, who was lashed to a cross shaped like the letter X.

A man bore each end of the bamboos of which the cross was made, and the prisoner was lashed to it spread-eagle fashion, by wrists, waist and ankles, so that he could not stir.

His bearers brought him before the chair of the missionary and dropped the cross suddenly, eliciting a cry of pain from the prisoner as he bumped on the hard ground, where he lay face down.

The cry caused Hastings to look up, and he saw before him Tokichiro Kama trying to lift his head up and groaning.

"What means this?" he asked, looking round him in doubt, but no answer was returned to his query.

Tokichiro's bearers had stepped back to join the circle of gazers and stood there, as grim and silent as ever, till the rustling in the bushes commenced again, and the tall form of Double Sword stepped out into the light of the lanterns.

Hastings shrunk back in his chair and looked with apprehension on the renowned outlaw, who, on his part, advanced and saluted him in a careless, haughty way:

"You are the missionary who was robbed last night? Do you recognize this robber?"

Hastings clasped his hands nervously.

"It is part of our creed to forgive injuries, my lord," he said, faintly. "I wish him no evil."

Double Sword frowned impatiently.

"I did not ask you that. I asked you if that was the leader of the robbers?"

Hastings hesitated.

"My lord, it was not light. I may have mistaken the voice—"

"Did you hear his voice?" asked the chief, in his stern, abrupt way.

"I—I thought I did," answered Hastings.

"Whose voice was it?" asked Double Sword.

"That of Tokichiro Kama," answered the missionary, almost inaudibly.

"It is well," said Double Sword. "And he stole your daughter. Yet you bear him no ill-will?"

"It is my religion," replied Hastings meekly. The outlaw laughed scornfully.

"Does your religion teach you that women are to be given up to robbers without so much as a fight?"

Hastings made no answer, and Double Sword continued in the same scornful way:

"Does your religion constrain you to forgive him now, when he has disgraced your daughter before all the world?"

Hastings bowed his head on his hands and murmured in English:

"Help me, oh my Master, to subdue my anger and pride. Oh how hard it is!"

Then he looked up to say with shaky voice:

"My lord has said it. My religion teaches me to forgive any and all injuries."

Double Sword drew back and pointed to the helpless Tokichiro saying:

"There lies the man that has disgraced your family. You are the *kataki-uchi*—the avenger. Here is my sword. Slay him."

Hastings rose slowly to his feet and held out his hand firmly.

"Give me the sword," he said.

Double Sword immediately drew one of his own weapons and handed it to the other.

The missionary raised the sword to Heaven, his lips moving in prayer, then exclaimed aloud in English:

"Oh Lord, open their hearts to thy will, by all thy past mercies!"

With that he strode to the helpless man lashed to the cross, and with the razor-like edge of the sharp sword deliberately cut the bonds that confined Tokichiro Kama, the samourai looking on in dead silence.

When the last bond was severed, he assisted the half-palsied man to his feet, where Tokichiro staggered from weakness.

Then the missionary turned to Double Sword.

"They that strike with the sword shall perish by the sword," he said in Japanese.

"Take back the blade, my lord, and learn the value of mercy. That is my religion."

Double Sword said not a word; but quietly sheathed the sword, while Hastings turned to Tokichiro and addressed him solemnly.

"My son," he said, "you came to my house and I bid you welcome. I never harmed you or yours but did you all good and preached to you the only true God. You, to requite me, have stolen my daughter away to be a slave for men to point the finger of scorn at her and me alike. Your life was given to me but my religion tells me that you are my brother. Go and sin no more."

He waved his hand and sunk back in his chair, while the outlaws allowed their long habits of impassivity to be broken.

They stared at each other amazedly. Such virtue was beyond them. They thought the missionary must be mad.

As for Tokichiro, he, after a moment's stupid incredulity burst out:

"Why don't you kill me? Here I am. It is your duty. Do you want me to throw filth on your mother's grave? Kill me, I say. None prevent you."

Hastings shook his head and pointed to the sky above him, saying:

"Tokichiro is wrong. God prevents me."

He thought he was preaching an effective sermon on forgiveness, but Tokichiro was by no means so affected.

He laughed scornfully and turned away, saying:

"Your daughter is but a—"

He got no further, when Double Sword, who had been twisting his beard during the scene, suddenly stepped out and brought down his broad hand on the insolent samourai's shoulder, growling:

"Enough, dog! He may forgive, but Kurosama does not pardon so easily."

With that he made a signal to his men, and the unhappy Tokichiro was seized and lashed to the bamboos more securely than before, when Double Sword commanded:

"Take him to the castle to be judged by Kurosama. Begone!"

He waited till the last man had retired and then stalked up to Hastings.

They were alone save for the old maid, and the outlaw looked down at him scornfully, and addressed him for the first time in English, at which the missionary stared and looked intensely alarmed.

"Mr. Hastings," he said, "did you ever hear your wife speak of Stephen Ely?"

Hastings turned ghastly pale, faltering:

"My God! what do you mean? Have you come from the grave to recall all my misery and trial of the past?"

Double Sword sneered bitterly.

"Misery and trial. Did you not bring it on yourself, fool? You married Flora Burgess knowing she loved another man and despised you. You knew it, didn't you?"

Hastings looked up at him, not without a dignity of his own.

"Sir," he said, "you are wrong. If you are the man of whom you spoke you know well that you behaved scandalously to the dead—"

Double Sword frowned heavily.

"If in what way?"

"In pretending to love her, and deserting her."

Double Sword drew a deep breath.

"Did she tell you that?"

"She did."

"Then God forgive her, for she lied to you. Man, my brother loved her, and she jilted him for me. I was fool enough to love her before I knew the truth; then I wrote to her as she deserved. Was I the man to blast my brother's life? I trusted she would marry him. I find I was mistaken. She fled to you. Why? What were you to her? No equivocation."

Hastings faced him without shrinking.

"You need not threaten me, sir, whoever you are. I was Flora Burgess's cousin and she fled to my sister and myself and told me how you had shamed her before all the people of the port of Yokohama. I saved her credit and character by marrying her. She told me her story, sir, and I knew that she had thrown away her affections on a man of Belial, a rebel to the best government."

"Stop!" said Double Sword harshly. "I am not listening to a treatise on morals from you. You married her. What became of her?"

"She died in the troubles of 1863," said Hastings.

"Did she have children?"

Hastings began to sob and choke at last.

"My God, man!" he cried, "can't you see you are torturing me to death with your insolent questions? Child? Child? Do you not know that my only child was stolen last night and that I am a lonely disgraced old man? What is it to you if I have a child? Can you give her back to me as she was last night?"

"If I could not, I should not be here," returned Double Sword in a different tone.

"Listen here, Mr. Hastings. Twenty years ago I was Stephen Ely and I made the mistake of my life. I saw it when it was too late, even when our ship was in her full career of success. The end was coming. I determined then that no woman should be linked to my unhappy fortunes, and I gave up Flora Burgess. I hoped she would marry my brother. When I came back here she had disappeared and I was under a ban in my own name as belonging to the side that was beaten. I entered Kurosama's service and made myself a new name. Only to-day at dawn I found your child and was able to rescue her from that scoundrel Tokichiro Kama. She is unhurt and with me—"

Hastings started up from his chair uttering loud thanksgivings of joy, but Double Sword checked him with the remark:

"Sir, I respect your feelings, but I do not share in your method of expressing them. It is my duty to tell you that I cannot give up your daughter except on conditions."

"What conditions?" asked Hastings, agast.

"Is she not my daughter, sir, to do with as I will?"

Double Sword shook his head.

"Not by any means. She is a lady like her mother. You are a blind fanatical man who run her into needless danger for no good. If I restore her to you, you must quit missionary life in Japan."

CHAPTER XXV.

HARA-KIRI.

THE missionary looked like a man who has been suddenly ducked in ice-water.

He almost gasped for breath.

"What," he cried, "do you mean to tell me, oh man of Belial, that you will detain my daughter from the work to which I think her future welfare calls her?"

Double Sword laughed.

"I mean just that. You've wasted thirty years here for nothing. As long as I only knew you as a missionary, I didn't care. As Flora's father it's different. She shall not stay here to be insulted and spit upon daily, as you are. I loved her mother too well to allow it."

Hastings grew angry at last.

"Sir," he said, "I will complain to the prince. I will denounce you to the authorities. You are a rebel amenable to punishment."

"And you a fool," interrupted Double Sword, in a tone of contempt. "The prince will order you away; the authorities laugh at you. In one word, if I restore your child, will you go away to Yokohama or not?"

"No," returned Hastings, shortly. "You are a man of Belial sent to tempt me."

Double Sword turned away.

"Then you'll see your child no more," he said, and he was stalking away when aunt Mehitable, who had not hitherto spoken, flew after him and clung to his arm, imploringly crying:

"Oh, sir, don't be so hasty. Herbert will yield. He must. Bethink you, sir, I brought the child up from an infant. She has never left me for a day. Do not be cruel. Don't rob me."

Double Sword seemed puzzled and moved.

"I would not be unjust," he said, slowly. "I know what a missionary has to undergo here, and now that I have saved the girl I cannot give her back to the same perils. Will you persuade him to come away?"

"I will," said Miss Hoyt, firmly, "or Flora and I leave him forever."

Double Sword bowed gravely.

"Understand me, madam, you can see the young lady to-night and remain with her; but I cannot allow Flora Burgess's child to be exposed again to insult and harm for the sake of a man who I begin to perceive is not quite right in his upper story. Will you come with me?"

"Where then is Flora?" asked the old man, eagerly.

"In the castle under the protection of the princess and her ladies," said Double Sword. "I will take you there at once."

When the Guardian of Pilots came into Kiroshima harbor next day she was greeted with a salvo of artillery from the castle and a profusion of the wonderful day fireworks which are made in no other part of the world save Japan.

Jack Ely was walking gloomily up and down the quarter-deck and when Meeto rallied him on his solemn face replied:

"What do I care for their fireworks? I've lost the only woman in the world and I don't care whether I live or die."

Meeto pressed his hand comfortingly.

"Be not too sure of that," he said. "I tell you that if Double Sword met Tokichiro the girl is safe."

"Ay, ay, if he met him. But how do you know he did?"

"Because I recognized in his band two of the very men who were with Tokichiro the night before last."

Jack shook his head gloomily.

"How can you be sure of them?"

Meeto in his turn looked vexed.

"Do you think I don't know my own father's vassals? You shall see."

The junk came to her anchorage and they got into the boat to be rowed ashore.

"Where are we going?" asked Jack.

"To pay homage to my father and give back his signet," returned Meeto.

Jack said no more.

The barge rowed to shore and they were received by a great crowd of people, headed by the prince's *samurai*.

They passed the *lorcha* lying at anchor as they rowed in.

Within the castle they were ushered into the presence of the prince whom they found holding audience in the midst of his guards. And the first person Jack saw was the fallen Tokichiro Kama prostrated before the prince.

Meeto nudged him.

"I told you so," he said. "Look at Double Sword."

The famous warrior, outlaw or admiral, it was hard to say which, stood beside the *saimio* before the old prince, his arms folded, his *ronins* behind him.

A dead silence was preserved in the saloon as Meeto and Jack came in, till they had prostrated themselves.

Then the old Prince said:

"My sons are welcome. What have they done for my name?"

Meeto offered the signet to his father, saying:

"We have taken the Guardian of Pilots into Kagosima; burned the town and come back to report ourselves."

"Who is this before me?" asked the prince, indicating Tokichiro.

Meeto looked at the *saimio* steadily and said: "Tokichiro Kama, who raised his hand to slay his lord!"

The old prince nodded.

"It is well. My sons have sent him back to meet his punishment. He shall have it."

He turned to Tokichiro.

"You are a happy man," he said grimly, "that you did not succeed in your attempt. Had you done so, you would have been hacked to pieces with rusty swords. As it is, you have liberty to depart to the next world. Go!"

The unhappy *saimio* looked round him, but saw no pity in any face there.

He turned his white face on his lord to say:

"I have no knife."

The prince frowned.

"Go and find one," he said quietly, "that your family may be saved the disgrace of a coward for their head."

Tokichiro made a last deep obeisance and tottered from the room.

"Where has he gone?" whispered Jack.

Meeto made a cross on his body to indicate that the poor wretch had been ordered to rip himself open, and Jack could not help a shudder of pity and disgust as he realized the terrible meaning of the prince's quiet and composed injunctions.

The old man took back his signet and said to Jack:

"My adopted son has done well. I have good news of him from Double Sword. He will make a great warrior. The audience is over for the day. Your mother expects to see you both."

Meeto pulled Jack's sleeve and they backed out. When they were outside the young prince joyfully embraced his friend, crying in English:

"My friend of friends your Flora is here and my mother has charge of her. The time has come for the ending of *nayboon*. Come with me."

And he led the way to another part of the castle from whence proceeded the noise of the tinkling Japanese guitar.

A few moments later Jack was bowing before a stately Japanese lady whom Meeto introduced as his mother, and beside her he saw—Flora.

Mr. Hastings gave up his unprofitable mission at last to the great relief of Prince Kurosama, to whom he had been a constant care for thirty years of hard, thankless labor.

He now runs the foreign church for the port of Yokohama, with better results spiritually and financially, and with a great improvement to his style of conversation which is no longer so full of texts as it used to be.

Jack Ely finally had a confidential talk with his uncle, when Double Sword got ready to give him an interview, but could not induce him to leave the service of Kurosama and enter the firm of Fish, Ely & Co., where he knew he would be a welcome member.

Stephen Ely refused steadfastly on the plea:

"No, no, my boy. As I made my bed so I must lie. We ex-Confederates all over the world have to bear our lot manfully. We made a mistake and got whipped, and the world never forgives that. Here as Double Sword I am honored and respected. The prince trusts me, and all the people bow down to me. As Steve Ely, who once sailed in the Alabama, I should be an object of secret hatred from every man who ever tried to run a cargo past our ship and got captured. As I am so I shall stay, and when the Japs fight their best, I've only one delight, to show them that our blood can do better than their best. You stick to your trade, and go ahead. I'm all right where I am."

He added rather sorrowfully:

"Poor old Bige. He was the best of us all three, and he's a lonely old bach. Some day, I'd like to go off with him and end our days together in the old Housatonic Valley. But probably that will never be. We exiles make fortunes, but we're too old to enjoy them after they're laid up."

Jack Ely was not so unlucky as his two uncles in their love affairs.

He not only courted Flora with success, but succeeded in the mission on which his uncle Abijah had primarily dispatched him.

Old Prince Myamoto Kurosama had a very keen eye to the main chance, with all his pride, as uncle 'Bijah had predicted, and Jack had the happiness of seeing his firm established as the factors of all the Kurosama rice revenues, involving the handling of three million of dollars every year with profits of more than ten per cent on the transaction.

He still lives in Japan, alternating between Kiroshima and Yokohama, has married Flora, and expects to come back about the year 1890, to enjoy a fortune of over a million dollars in the only land in the world fit to live in as a steady thing—our own glorious United States of America.

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